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Citation for published version:

Naumann, I, McLean, CM, Koslowski, A, Tisdall, EKM & Lloyd, E 2013, *Early Childhood Education and Care Provision: International Review of Policy, Delivery and Funding*. Scottish Executive.
<<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/03/4564/0>>

Link:

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Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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Early Childhood Education and Care Provision: International Review of Policy, Delivery and Funding Final Report

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROVISION: INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF POLICY, DELIVERY AND FUNDING

FINAL REPORT

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Scottish Government Social Research
March 2013

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KEY TERMS WITHIN COUNTRY REPORTS

Chapter 2 – Country Report Scotland

Childminding: family day care for children of all ages

Children/family centre: multi-purpose service centre for children and their families, including ECEC

Creche: ‘drop-in’ care for children

Full-time nursery place: whole-day, five days per week

Home carers: family, friend, neighbour care; nannies

Independent schools: private schools

Nurseries: centre-based care for children under five years which may be provided on a public or private basis (includes local authority nursery classes which are part-time day care services for three to four year olds in primary schools as well as nursery schools which are independent, often full-day centres)

Playgroup: sessional care for children under five; often provided by parents or other community volunteers

School-age childcare: out-of-school group-based care, including holiday play schemes and breakfast clubs

Chapter 3 – Country Report England

Childcare: generally refers to provision for children below the age of three and for children generally outwith educational hours

Childminding: family day care for children of all ages

Children’s Centre: multi-purpose service centre for children and their families, including ECEC

Day nursery: centre-based care for children under five years

Early Years Entitlement (EYE): the central government provides funding to local authorities to ensure that every three and five year olds has access to a part-time nursery education

Formal care: includes day care centres, children’s centres, sessional care/playgroups

Home carers: family, friend, neighbour care; nannies

Nursery class: class in primary school for three to four year olds, usually part-time

Playgroup/preschool: usually part-time services for children between two and four years

Reception class: 1st year of primary school, may take four year olds

School-age childcare: out-of-school group-based care

Chapter 4 – Country Report Sweden

After school care (fritidshem): called free-time services in Sweden, offered at the end of the school day

Family day carers (dagbarnvårdare): provide pedagogical care (*pedagogisk verksamhet*)

Free-time pedagogues (fritidspädagoger): work in after school care (in Sweden these are called ‘free time’ services)

Independent preschools: privately-owned preschools

Maximum fee (maxtaxa): maximum amount any parents pay for ECEC

Municipalities (kommuner): the main providers of publicly-funded ECEC services

Nursery nurses (barnskötare): work in preschool and preschool class settings

Open preschool (öppen förskola): offering playgroup activities to children (mostly under three) accompanied by their parents/carers

Pedagogical care (pedagogisk verksamhet): formerly family day care (*familjedaghem*). This is all-year round full-day provision, usually for a small number of children in the carer’s home

Preschool (förskola): an ‘age integrated’ centre offering all-year and full-day provision for all children aged one to six

Preschool class (förskoleklass): for six year olds before starting school at the age of seven. This is usually located in a school and is considered part of the public school system

Preschool teachers (förskolelärare): work in preschools and preschool class settings

Chapter 5 – Country Report Denmark

After-school centres (fritidshjem): for children aged six to ten years, sometimes older

Childminder (dagplejer): provide childminding services for children aged zero to three years

Childminding (dagpleje): family day care catering for children from 26 weeks to three years

Day-care centres (dagtilbud): usually run as age-integrated institutions (*aldersintegrerede institutioner*) – for children from three months to six years (sometimes up to twelve years)

Kindergarten (børnehaver): for children from three to six years

Nurseries (vuggestuer): for children from 26 weeks to six years

Pedagogue or educator (pædagog): the lead personnel in all day care facilities

Pedagogue or educator assistant (pædagogmedhjælper): support pedagogue or educators in their work in day care facilities

School free time facilities (skolefritidsordninger SFOs): school-based after-school care

Chapter 6 – Country Report Norway

Family kindergartens (familiebarnehager): childminding or family day care service

Kindergartens (barnehager): half-day or full-day full-year service for children one to six years

Open kindergartens (åpen barnehager): drop-in centres for parent and child

Out-of-school care (skolefritidsordningen, or SFOs): leisure time activities for school-aged children (aged six to eleven) before and after school

Chapter 7 – Country Report Slovenia

Education-based childminder (vzgojno-varstvena družina): preschool type of services, as provision falls under the same national curriculum as preschools. The provision is provided at the childminder's home

Independent preschool (samostojni vrtec): preschool centres may also be provided privately and are eligible for public funding

Occasional childminder (občasno varstvo na domu): preschool teachers or contractors with at least secondary education or five years experience in education may provide ECEC in the child's own home. Parents pay the entirety of this service

Out-of-school services: those provided outwith school hours

Preschool (vrtec): full-time services provided by the local municipality are available to all children from one to six years old (when they begin school). Publicly provided preschools may be organised as independent units or may be attached to primary schools (*vrtec pri osnovni šoli*)

Registered childminder (registriran varuh predšolskih otrok): registered with the Ministry of Education and Sport if they meet particular requirements. They may provide childcare only and not educational programmes

Chapter 8 – Country Report France

Caisses des allocations familiales (CAFs): work with communes and non-profit organizations to develop ECEC at the local level, and distribute family allowances and subsidies for childcare

Child assistants (ATSEM): auxiliary staff in the école maternelle

Children's nurses (puéricultrices): work in the centre-based services

Child educators (éducateurs de jeunes enfants): work in the centre-based services

Centre-based care:

- *crèches:* centres receiving children on a permanent basis
- *crèches collectives:* run by municipalities, departments or non-profit organisations
- *crèches parentales:* run by parent cooperatives
- *crèche d'entreprise:* employer crèches, mostly in the public sector and hospitals
- *centres multi-accueil:* offers full-time, part-time and emergency places

- *haltes garderies*: centres providing part-time and occasional care; operated by municipalities and non-profit providers; often for non-working parents or for parents who work non-standard hours
- *jardins d'enfants*: commercial centres for two to six year olds

Family day care, or childminding (assistantes maternelle):

- *licensed childminders (assistantes maternelles agréées)*: care for one to three children in the provider's home
- *childminding networks (crèche familiale)*: networks for individual childminders to provide collective care

Nursery school (école maternelle): pre-primary education for children aged three to six (some two year olds); part of the state education system

National Family Allowance Fund (Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales – CNAF): partly funds childcare, by the public agency responsible for family policy

Nursing assistants (auxiliaires de puériculture) : work in the centre-based services

In-home caregivers (garde à domicile): care in the child's home; not subject to the same regulations as childminders

Out of school services (centre de loisirs sans hébergement): leisure time centres for children outside of school hours and on Wednesday afternoons

Teachers in the école maternelle (professeurs des écoles): work in the school system

Chapter 9 – Country Report Netherlands

Day nurseries (kinderdagverblijf): for children from six to eight weeks of age until their fourth birthday who might attend week days from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. These may be run as either private-for-profit or not-for-profit businesses and a number are part of childcare company chains

Family day care with registered childminders (gastouderopvang): for children from six weeks to twelve years of age. Flexible childcare in a family setting, usually in the childminder's home, is also offered

Out- of- school care (buitenschoolse opvang): for children from four to twelve years of age who are attending primary school. Since 2007, the school board is required by law to organize this type of childcare before and after school, on non- teaching days such as teacher training days and in school holidays (excluding public holidays)

Playgroups (peuterspeelzaal): for children from two and four years who can attend two mornings or afternoons a week. These institutions' registration and inspection are the responsibility of municipalities

1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC) provision has been widely acknowledged by governments of advanced economies. High quality ECEC services benefit children's development, boost educational attainment, encourage female labour market participation and contribute to a reduction in child poverty.

There is considerable movement at the European and international level with respect to early years provision. Most European countries have reformed their ECEC system or are in the process of reforming it, and access to ECEC services has been extended considerably in the last ten to fifteen years across Europe. The OECD, the EU and the UN have published a series of comparative reports in recent years emphasising the significance of early childhood education and care and its relevance to economic and social policy in advanced economies.¹ In February 2011, the European Commission issued a Communication urging national governments to take action by analysing and evaluating their national ECEC provision, improving access and quality and investing in ECEC as a long-term growth-enhancing measure. As such, the expansion and development of high quality ECEC in all Member States is an integral part of the European Union's overarching Europe 2020 Strategy.²

While the incentives and objectives for developing ECEC provision are similar across Europe, the approaches taken and the organisational structures of national ECEC systems differ considerably: some countries have moved to fully integrated systems providing early childhood education and care for all age groups of preschool children, often also featuring integrated approaches to school education and after school care, while others are developing provision within a system that differentiates between early education and childcare. In some countries ECEC is predominantly public, in others the development of childcare markets has been encouraged. Structure and levels of financing, curricular orientations and staff qualifications also differ between countries.

In light of the increased policy attention to ECEC in European countries, and the consequences of public spending restrictions, it is important to understand the different systems of ECEC provision and financing, and to identify their positive aspects and challenges. Thus, the commissioning of this international review by the Scottish Government comes at a very timely moment. In its Early Years Framework in 2008, the Scottish Government set out a ten-year vision for achieving a more coherent and community-based approach to supporting Scotland's families that focuses on equal access to high-quality universal services to deliver prevention and

¹ See for example: OECD, *Babies and Bosses* series (2002-2007); OECD, *Starting Strong* series I-III (2001, 2006, 2012); Eurydice, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, Brussels, 2009; UNICEF, *Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*, Geneva, 2007.

² European Commission, *European Commission Communication: Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, 2011. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf

early intervention;³ and in 2011 it made the pledge to develop its ECEC system to 'match the best elsewhere in Europe'. We hope this report will help to draw policy lessons from other national experiences in order to support the development of early years policy in Scotland and internationally.

1.1 Aims and objectives

This report provides an overview of the current situation regarding early childhood education and care provision in Scotland, England, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Slovenia, France and the Netherlands. For each of these nations the review provides a country report (chapters two to nine) with detailed information on the national frameworks of ECEC, guiding principles and objectives, governance, types of services, types of providers, funding and costs, systems of quality assurance and access levels. There is, of course, some duplication of information in the Scotland and England chapters, as many relevant areas are not fully devolved. In addition, the report covers the provision of after school care in the eight countries.

In line with the extensive work on the subject by the OECD, the European Commission and other international organisations, ECEC is defined here as all educational and care arrangements for children from birth to compulsory schooling, regardless of setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content.⁴ As this wide definition indicates, ECEC can take many forms. A key objective of this report is to provide insight into the different ways in which ECEC is organised in the eight countries that form part of this review. While presenting our findings in English we have aimed at staying as close as possible to the national terminology so as to better convey the national understandings of ECEC. However, a few conceptual clarifications are in place regarding some general terms that are common in international and national discussion about ECEC, but that tend to be used in slightly different ways across European countries.

An important distinction is often made between formal and informal non-parental ECEC provision. In some countries represented in this report, such as Denmark or Sweden, formal ECEC is extensive and informal care uncommon, whereas in the Netherlands, England or Scotland, parents rely heavily on informal childcare arrangements. Nevertheless, it may be important to note that in all European countries, irrespective of how comprehensive their ECEC systems are, the dominant form of ECEC in children's lives is parental care. In this report we follow the OECD definition where formal ECEC is understood as government-regulated non-parental ECEC provided outside of the child's home which includes creches, day care centres, family day care/registered childminders, and preschool programmes. In line with this definition, the terms ECEC services and formal ECEC are used synonymously here. Informal childcare we define as non-parental childcare arranged privately by the child's parent either in the child's home or elsewhere, and provided by relatives, friends, neighbours, babysitters or nannies. Informal ECEC can be paid

³ The Scottish Government/COSLA, *The Early Years Framework*, 2008. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf>; Scottish National Party manifesto, 2011, p. 22. Available at: http://votesnp.com/cakpaigns/SNP_Manifesto_2011_lowRes.pdf

⁴ See OECD portal 'Early Childhood Education and Care'. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/preschoolandschool/earlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm>

or unpaid, but is generally unregulated.⁵ In practice the distinction between formal and informal ECEC is not always clear-cut. For example, playgroups, generally considered a form of formal ECEC, often have a rather informal set-up and character as a meeting place for babies and their parents, and sometimes not requiring formal enrolment of the child or specific staff qualifications. While public support for meeting costs is generally geared towards formal ECEC provision, in recent years some countries have moved towards also supporting certain forms of informal childcare. For example, in England and Scotland it is possible for parents to register nannies to take advantage of childcare related tax deductions.

Another important distinction is that between 'public' and 'private' in terms of funding and provision: while in some countries, such as Slovenia, ECEC is mainly funded and provided by the state, ECEC provision in most European countries is a mixed economy with both public and private funding and provision. The proportion of public and private involvement in ECEC, however, differs considerably between countries. For example, in Norway a fairly high proportion of private ECEC providers exists, but all ECEC services are predominantly state-funded. And in some countries, such as England and Scotland, we see a public/private split according to type of ECEC service, where preschool education is mainly public, while private providers dominate on the childcare market. Different countries tend to use different definitions of 'public' and 'private'. 'Public' in this report refers to the state and its agencies at the central, regional and local levels (in terms of funding this means mainly tax-financing); 'private' encompasses all non-state actors including individuals (e.g. parents), voluntary organisations and corporations. Private ECEC can further be divided into non-profit and for-profit provision.

The last distinction we would like to introduce is that between integrated ECEC and split ECEC provision. While the term 'early childhood education and care' is now commonly used as a technical umbrella term for all forms of early years provision, it nevertheless carries the implication, or aspiration, that early years provision contains both an educational focus, aiming to further the young child's development, and a care component, providing care for the child while the parent has other commitments, usually employment or training. Thus, there is the sense that 'education' and 'childcare' are integral aspects of early years provision. In practice there is a more or less strong distinction in many European countries between services that focus on childcare and others that predominantly deliver educational programmes for preschool children. However, in recent years, there have been developments across Europe for a stronger integration of ECEC provision. Integration can happen on different levels: firstly, in terms of governance structures we have seen a move in many countries to unite responsibility for early years provision under one ministry where this was split between different government departments in the past. Responsibility for ECEC provision has frequently been moved over to Ministries of Education from Ministries of Social Affairs or Family Affairs. This trend indicates a second form of integration: one that strengthens the educational dimension of 'childcare', or in other words, integrates 'education' and 'care' on the level of service provision itself. Not all countries that have integrated governance structures have also followed suit with integration of services: a stronger

⁵ See OECD (2010): Family database factsheet PF2.2: Informal childcare arrangements, available at: www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database

emphasis on early years education does not imply that all preschool programmes are also suitable as 'childcare', by, for example, supporting employed parents with their care obligations. Finally, there is a third form of integration: a continuity of ECEC for children across the life course, from birth to young adulthood. In some countries, such as Denmark, there has been an emphasis on policy coordination so that an entitlement exists to good quality care and education for a child at all ages, leaving no gaps between parental leave, access to ECEC for babies and toddlers, older preschool children and after-school care for school-aged children. In other countries universal access to ECEC exists for certain age groups of children, mostly three to five year olds, but with no guaranteed provision for younger or older children. In this report we define those ECEC systems that present integration on all three levels as fully integrated.

This last point leads to another important aspect of ECEC provision. ECEC is embedded within wider socio-economic and policy contexts and the success of any ECEC policy strategy will depend on the way it links in with families' economic and social needs and other policies. A second objective of this review is to provide information on wider issues related to ECEC provision: on socio-economic context and employment patterns in the eight countries, as well as on maternity and parental leave policy and uptake patterns. Each country report also includes a section on the wider welfare system and social support for families, giving the interested reader an overview of benefits available to families in each of the selected countries.

For over three decades the European Union has been concerned with promoting the reconciliation of work and family life.⁶ The issues of early years provision and parental leave became particularly pertinent at the European level following the inception of the Lisbon Agenda in 2000:

- The Lisbon Strategy set the targets to increase female labour market participation across Europe to 60% or more.
- In 2002, the European Council in Barcelona set targets for ECEC provision to coverage of at least 90% for preschool children (age three to school-age) and of 33% for under-threes.
- In 2010, the EU issued a parental leave directive, followed by the above mentioned Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care in 2011.

These steps by the EU demonstrate the importance of early years provision and reconciliation policies to the EU's agenda. The OECD, the UN, and the World Bank are similarly emphasising these issues.⁷ While in the beginning of the 2000s the international policy debate was focused on expanding early years provision in quantitative terms, there has now been a shift in perspective towards the quality of ECEC provision.⁸

⁶ See for example: European Commission, *Council Recommendations on Child Care*, 1992; European Commission Network, *Quality targets in services for young children*, EC, Brussels, 1996.

⁷ See for example: UNICEF, *Progress for children. A report card on child protection*, no. 8, New York, 2009; UNICEF, *The children left behind. A league table of inequality in child well-being in the world's rich countries*, No. 9, New York, 2010; World Bank, *Investing in Young Children. An Early Childhood Development Guide for Policy Dialogue and Project Preparation*, Washington DC, 2011; OECD, *Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, Paris, 2012.

⁸ European Commission, *European Commission Communication: Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, 2011.

In its 2011 Communication the European Commission recommends that Member States:

- improve access to universally available, high-quality and inclusive ECEC services that are based on efficient and equitable funding systems;
- develop quality through the integration of 'care' and 'education' and the professionalisation of the ECEC workforce.

As a third objective this review discusses to what extent the eight countries are meeting EU targets and recommendations (chapter ten).

1.2 Methodology for this review

A series of large-scale international projects on ECEC cover the eight countries discussed in this review, and these are extensively referenced in the report. However, these earlier projects do not combine an overview of ECEC systems, parental leave systems, employment patterns and broader contextual factors. Furthermore, early years policy has been developing rapidly in recent years, such that information on ECEC is quickly out of date.

The aim of this project has been to collect the most up-to-date information available. For this purpose it draws on the following sources:

- the most recent national government reports on various aspects of ECEC;
- communication with civil servants in national ministries and national experts for feedback and to ensure that we have collated the most recent and accurate information in this report;
- national and international statistics providing macro-level data (such as general employment rates; fertility rates, enrolment rates in ECEC); preference has been given to national statistical references in line with the tender guidance; OECD and EUROSTAT data has been used where national data are not available (e.g. not all countries make social expenditure data publicly available), or where it is particularly authoritative (e.g. EUROSTAT data on employment);
- relevant publications providing analyses of micro-level data (such as maternal employment patterns; duration of ECEC attendance, informal care arrangements);
- academic literature for broader background information.

There is often at least a twelve month, if not a 24 month delay in the release of annually collected national statistical indicators, so data for 2010/11 is often the most up to date available. For some indicators, data is not published annually, so earlier years have been used. Data availability and measurement varies considerably across countries, reflecting the needs of different national systems, so indicators are not always directly comparable. This means that direct comparisons across countries should not be made due to these data issues.

We have relied extensively on our communication with national experts to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information and the most authoritative sources currently available.

Most financial information has been presented in the national currency but also includes a conversion to British pounds sterling using the Bank of England spot exchange rate for 5 October 2012.

2 COUNTRY REPORT: SCOTLAND

2.1 Key findings

- ECEC is integrated in terms of overall ministerial responsibility, but with different sub-departments for education and for childcare services. Not all early years services follow the educational framework. Education and regulation of childcare is a devolved matter. ECEC is not integrated with parental and other leave.
- ECEC policy is split between the UK government and the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. While Scotland has responsibility for the provision of education and social services, including early education and childcare, and aspects of workforce qualifications and development, the Westminster Government retains responsibility for other ECEC-related areas such as leave policies and the tax system.
- Across the UK, public expenditure on social protection makes up 28% of GDP. In 2007, 3.6% of GDP was directed towards family benefits. 0.7% of GDP was spent on preschool education and 0.4% on childcare, for a total of about 1.1% of GDP.
- With the transition to Universal Credit, the UK benefit system is currently undergoing a period of reform. From 2013, the Universal Credit will replace child tax credits and housing benefits previously available to families with children.
- Parental leave in Scotland is unpaid.
- Curriculum for Excellence is Scotland's integrated curriculum for children and young people age three to eighteen.
- 96.1% of three to four year olds receive some free early education.
- Early education and childcare in Scotland encompasses a wide range of services. Formal provision includes nurseries (day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes), playgroups, children or family centres and registered childminding. Many children are also looked after informally by grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers.
- Childcare costs in Scotland are among the highest in Britain for part-time places; parents pay nearly as much as parents in Southern England, but on lower incomes.
- Two separate agencies are responsible for the regulation and inspection of ECEC services in Scotland – Education Scotland for education services and the Care Inspectorate for childcare services.
- ECEC is a mixed economy financed by the state (18%) and by private individuals (70%). Much childcare is provided informally.

2.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ ECEC is integrated in terms of overall ministerial responsibility, but with different sub-departments for education and for childcare services. Not all early years services follow the educational framework. Education and regulation of childcare is a devolved matter. ECEC is not integrated with parental and other leave.

Since 2007, the Scottish Government has adopted an outcomes-centred approach to improvement in the delivery of public services through the National Performance Framework.⁹ The Framework sets out overall objectives and outcomes to be achieved over a ten-year period, with progress measured by specific national indicators and targets. A key aspect of this national strategy is early intervention to promote children's development.

As outlined in the Early Years Framework, introduced in 2008, such intervention is expected to improve individual well-being and deliver wider social and economic benefits by combating inequality early on in life. The guiding principles for ECEC development as well as children's services more broadly are reflected in the Scottish Government publication *Getting it Right for Every Child*¹⁰. This policy document outlines a national vision for children's services based on the recognition of children's rights.

Employment legislation on maternity, paternity and parental leaves and other benefits and taxation are organised at the UK government level. As in England, growth in maternal employment in the 1980s and 1990s spurred the development of commercial forms of care services. Leave provision is not integrated with ECEC provision.

2.3 Socio-economic context

5.2 million people live in Scotland,¹¹ or roughly 8% of the UK population.¹² The Scottish population increased by almost 4% over the last ten years, largely due to immigration from overseas. Population density ranges widely from eight people per square kilometre in Eilean Siar to 3,412 people per square kilometre in Glasgow.¹³

In line with broader trends, the Scottish population has been aging and the median age is now 41.¹⁴ In 2009 people age 65 and over made up 16.7% of the Scottish population, compared with 17.6% for the under-16s. For the UK, the proportions were 16.4% and 18.7% respectively.¹⁵

⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/NPFChanges>

¹⁰ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

¹¹ Data from 2010. Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Region and Country Profiles: Key Statistics*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/regional-trends/region-and-country-profiles/key-statistics-and-profiles---august-2012/index.html>

¹² ONS, *Social Trends*, No. 41, 2011.

¹³ General Register Office for Scotland, *Mid-2011 Population Estimates Scotland*, 2012.

¹⁴ General Register Office for Scotland, *Mid-2011 Population Estimates Scotland*, 2012.

¹⁵ ONS, 'Regional Profiles – Summary – Scotland.' *Regional Trends*, No. 43, 2011.

In 2011, Scotland's birth rate was 11.1 per thousand people, which was lower than other parts of the UK but higher than the EU average.¹⁶ The total fertility rate was 1.77.¹⁷ Nearly 6% of all live births were to women under 20 years of age in 2011.¹⁸

Lone parent families make up 6.6% of all households.¹⁹ 15.3% of Scottish children lived in workless households in 2010, which was lower than other parts of the UK.²⁰ 13% of children lived in households with income below 60% of the median for at least three of the four years between 2005-2008.²¹

Box 2.1: Summary of key population statistics²²

Total fertility rate: 1.77
Teenage births: 5.8%
Lone parent families: 6.6%
Children living in poverty: 13%
Children living in workless households: 15.3%

2.4 Employment patterns

Scotland's total employment rate for adults age 16-64 is 71.4%, 66.7% for women and 76.2% for men. The unemployment rate is 8.0% for those over 16 years of age.²³ In Scotland, 13% of employed men work part-time, while 43% of employed women do so.²⁴

¹⁶ General Register Office for Scotland, *High Level Summary of Statistics: Population and Migration*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>

¹⁷ Data from 2009. ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Social Indicators*, 2012.

¹⁸ Data from 2011. General Register Office for Scotland, *Births Time Series Data*, 2012.

¹⁹ Data from 2010. ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Social Indicators*, 2012.

²⁰ ONS, 'Regional Profiles – Summary – Scotland.' *Regional Trends*, No. 43, 2011.

²¹ Scottish Government, *Key Scottish income and poverty figures*, 2008-2009.

²² These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

²³ Scottish Government, *Labour Market Brief*, July 2012.

²⁴ All part-time data from 2011. Annual Population Survey. ONS, *Labour Market Regional Tables, Scotland*, 2012.

Box 2.2: Summary of employment statistics²⁵

Total employment rate: 71.4%
Total unemployment rate: 8.0%
Women's employment rate: 66.7%
Men's employment rate: 76.2%
Employed women working part-time: 43%
Employed men working part-time: 13%
Mothers' employment rate: 59.4%²⁶
Fathers' employment rate: 88%

Data on parental employment patterns is available at the UK level only (not separately for Scotland or England). Employment rates for mothers and fathers with a child under six were 59.4% and 88.0% respectively. Employment rates for mothers and fathers with a child age six to eleven are slightly higher: 71.9% and 89.5% respectively. 58% of mothers and 6-7% of fathers with children age eleven and under work part-time.

2.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children

Scotland has a GDP of £124 billion,²⁷ with services accounting for the majority of economic activity (74% in 2007).²⁸ In 2010-11, total public sector expenditure for Scotland was £63.8 billion, or 9.3% of UK public sector expenditure.²⁹

In 2009-2010, 2.6 billion was spent on children and families (or £502 per head).³⁰ 7.7 billion was spent on education (£1,489 per head), of which 0.3 billion (£59 per head) was directed toward preschool education for children under five years.³¹ Total annual expenditure on preschool by all local authorities in Scotland was about £318.3m in 2010/11.³²

→ Across the UK, public expenditure on social protection makes up 28% of GDP.³³ In 2007 3.6% of GDP was directed toward family benefits.³⁴ 0.7% of GDP was spent on preschool education and 0.4% on childcare, for a total of about 1.1% of GDP.³⁵

²⁵ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

²⁶ Parental employment levels are available only at UK level.

²⁷ Data for 2011. Excludes activity which is not assigned to any particular region. Scottish Government, *Key Economy Statistics*, August 2012.

²⁸ Scottish Government Statistics, *Key Economy Statistics*, August 2012.

²⁹ Scottish Government, *Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland 2010-2011*, 2012.

³⁰ 'Per head' means per person in the population.

³¹ HM Treasury, 'Section 4 Country and Regional Analyses,' *Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2011*, 2011.

³² Correspondence from Scottish Government, 24 September 2012.

³³ Data from 2010. Eurostat Country Profiles – United Kingdom.

³⁴ OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011.

³⁵ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011.

Box 2.3: Summary of public expenditure (Scotland)³⁶
GDP: £124 billion
Total public sector expenditure: £63.8 billion
On children and families: £2.6 billion
On preschool education: £0.3 billion

UK-wide social security schemes include:

- National Insurance, which provides cash benefits for sickness, unemployment, death of a partner, retirement, etc. People earn entitlement to these benefits by paying National Insurance contributions;
- the National Health Service (NHS), which provides medical, dental and optical treatment and which is normally available free of charge only to people who live in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- the child benefit and tax credit schemes, which provide cash benefits for people bringing up children;
- non-contributory benefits for certain categories of disabled persons or carers;
- other statutory payments made by employers to employees when a child is born or placed for adoption.

Families with children are generally eligible for Child Benefit. Child Benefit is currently £20.30 for the eldest child and a further £13.40 for each subsequent child per week. From January 2013, Child Benefit is being removed from higher rate tax payers (and their partners).

Child Tax Credit is an income-related payment to support families with one or more children under age 16, or up to age 20 if the child is in full-time education or training.

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit provides a means-tested benefit for in-work families to offset the cost of purchasing childcare.

→ With the transition to Universal Credit, the UK benefit system is currently undergoing a period of reform. From 2013, the Universal Credit will replace child tax credits and housing benefits previously available to families with children.

³⁶ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

2.6 Leave policies for families with small children³⁷

2.6.1 Structure

There is no difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK regarding leave provision. Most leave policies have been introduced relatively recently in the UK. Provision is structured into maternity, paternity and parental leave.

- Maternity leave is for 52 weeks, which can start from eleven weeks before the expected birth date. A mother can choose to return to employment from two weeks after childbirth. Up to ten 'keep in touch' days can be worked without affecting maternity leave or pay. After the first 20 weeks, the remaining maternity leave can be transferred to her partner (husband, partner, biological father, civil partner) if she returns to employment. The leave then becomes additional paternity leave and is for a minimum of two weeks and maximum of 26 weeks.
- Paternity leave is for two weeks and must be taken within the first 56 days of the baby's birth.
- Parental leave is available as an individual right (i.e. per parent per child), for 13 weeks up to the child's fifth birthday, with a maximum of four weeks leave to be taken in any one calendar year. It is unpaid.

2.6.2 Payment and funding

Statutory maternity leave is paid at 90% of a woman's average earnings for six weeks with no ceiling and a flat rate payment of either £135.45 or 90% of average gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for 33 weeks. The remaining 13 weeks are unpaid. Additional paternity leave is compensated according to the same formula. Paternity leave is a flat-rate payment as for maternity leave, funded in the same way.

Maternity and paternity leave is paid by employers who can then claim the money back from the taxation agency. It is financed by National Insurance Contributions from employers and employees.

→ Parental leave in Scotland is unpaid.

2.6.3 Role of employers

All employees who have worked for their employer continuously for 26 weeks, into the fifteenth week before the week the baby is due, are eligible for statutory maternity pay or additional paternity leave (APL), as outlined above. In addition, those on APL must have remained employed into the week before the leave is due to start.

³⁷ This section draws heavily from the work of O'Brien, M, 'United Kingdom', in P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies*, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012.

Many employers make additional provisions that go beyond the statutory minimum for maternity leave. A minority of employers go beyond the statutory minimum for paternity leave. Employers may postpone granting parental leave for up to six months where leave-taking would cause significant disruption to the business.

Employers have a legal duty to consider requests from employees to work flexibly, and may refuse them only where there is a clear business case for doing so.

Employees may also take a “reasonable” amount of time off work to deal with emergencies.

2.6.4 Uptake of leave

Survey data from 2009/10 suggests that the mean length of maternity leave taken by women was 39 weeks in 2008. Less than half of mothers used the remaining period of unpaid leave. The same survey suggested that 91% of fathers took some time off around their baby’s birth, though not all of these took statutory paternity leave.

There are no available statistics for take up of statutory parental leave or additional paternity leave.

2.7 National framework of ECEC

In the Scottish ECEC system provision for children from birth to five is not unified, with a differentiation between preschool education that focuses on three to five year olds and is usually delivered in public part-time settings, and childcare, particularly for the under-threes, that is predominantly provided by the private sector. There is no direct link between the universal preschool entitlement that starts the term following a child’s third birthday and maternity and parental leave which ends after a year. The Scottish Government has undertaken a number of steps to improve and increase early education and childcare in Scotland. The Scottish Early Years Framework (2008) has introduced a strengthened focus on collaboration and partnership between providers, local government and families; and in 2010 an early years curriculum for the preschool level was introduced as part of the new Scottish curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence.³⁸ The Curriculum for Excellence aims to provide an integrated education system from early years to age eighteen.

2.7.1 Governance

→ ECEC policy is split between the UK government and the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. While Scotland has responsibility for the provision of education and social services, including early education and childcare, and aspects of workforce qualifications and development, the Westminster Government retains responsibility for other ECEC-related areas such as leave policies and the tax system.

Overall responsibility for Scottish education policy falls under the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning. The Minister for Children and Young People

³⁸ The Scottish Government/COSLA (2008). The Early Years Framework. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257007/0076309.pdf>.

oversees policy development for early education and childcare services, while the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages is responsible for the school curriculum (Curriculum for Excellence). There is a single Scottish Government Directorate for Learning with separate divisions for Learning, and for Children and Families.

Education Scotland, a newly formed executive agency, has taken over responsibilities previously held by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Learning and Teaching Scotland, such as the inspection of educational centres and the development of the curriculum.

At the local level, councils organise educational services and make decisions about how central government funding and local tax revenues are spent.³⁹

2.7.2 Types of services

→ Early education and childcare in Scotland encompasses a wide range of services. Formal provision includes nurseries (day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes), playgroups, children or family centres and childminding. Many children are also looked after informally by grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers.

The term 'nursery' commonly used in Scotland encompasses a range of different types of services: private day nurseries are usually open full-time all year round, with the options for parents to purchase full-time or part-time childcare; there exist also local authority nurseries offering longer hours. Public nursery schools and nursery classes provide preschool education and tend to run on a part-time basis and follow the same academic year as the school system.

A funded preschool entitlement is available for all three and four year olds. It is generally delivered on a part-time basis of 2.5 hour sessions per day, morning or afternoon (12.5 hours/ week or 475 hours/ year) and is available in different types of settings: nurseries, playgroups or children's centres.⁴⁰ In settings where full-day provision is offered, the preschool entitlement can be combined with the purchasing of additional hours (usually on a full-day or half-day basis).

³⁹ European Commission, 'United Kingdom – Scotland.' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011. Available at:

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/>
⁴⁰ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

Box 2.4: Types of services⁴¹

Nurseries: centre-based care for children under 5 years which may be provided on a public or private basis (includes local authority nursery classes which are part-time day care services for 3 and 4 year olds in primary schools as well as nursery schools which are independent, often full-day centres)

Children/family centre: multi-purpose service centre for children and their families, including ECEC

Crèche: 'drop-in' care for children

Playgroup: sessional care for children under 5; often provided by parents or other community volunteers

Childminding: family day care for children of all ages

Home carers: family, friend, neighbour care; nannies

School-age childcare: out-of-school group-based care, including holiday play schemes and breakfast clubs

In 2011 there were a total of 10,159 active, registered ECEC service providers. The number of registered ECEC providers increased by 0.5% between 2010 and 2011 as a result of an increase in childminding services.⁴²

The number of ECEC services varies across urban and rural areas. In general, remote areas had a larger number of services which served smaller numbers of children compared to urban areas.⁴³

2.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

Of all formal ECEC service providers, including childminders, playgroups, out-of-school care, children/family centres and nurseries, the vast majority (70%) run on a commercial or for-profit basis, compared to 12% run on a private not-for-profit basis and 18% which are run publicly.⁴⁴

Excluding childminders, nearly half of ECEC services are operated by local authorities (45%). This percentage has increased slightly since 2008. Commercially run services make up 29% of services (excluding childminders) and have also been increasing slightly since 2008. 27% are not-for-profit services, which have been on the decline.⁴⁵

Of nurseries specifically, the majority are public (62%); 30% are for-profit and 8% non-profit.⁴⁶ 52% of nurseries in Scotland offer a part-time service only.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Care Inspectorate, *Childcare Statistics 2011*, October 2012. Available at: http://www.scswis.com/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=8148andItemid=694; Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: United Kingdom,' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.

⁴² Care Inspectorate, 2012.

⁴³ Care Inspectorate, 2012.

⁴⁴ Scottish Government, *Preschool and Childcare Statistics 2010*, 2010. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Children/PubPreSchoolEdChildcare>

⁴⁵ Care Inspectorate, 2012.

⁴⁶ Scottish Government, *Preschool and Childcare Statistics 2010*, 2010.

⁴⁷ Care Inspectorate, 2012.

Box 2.5: Public/private mix of services			
	Public	Commercial	Voluntary
All formal ECEC	18%	70%	12%
ECEC excluding childminders	45%	29%	27%
Nurseries	62%	30%	8%

Three and four year old Scottish children are currently entitled to at least 475 hours of preschool education per year, usually delivered as 12½ hours per week over the school year (38 weeks). These preschool places may be provided on a public, commercial or voluntary basis.

Local councils may directly provide preschool education through nursery classes within primary schools, nursery schools just for preschool age children or within children/family centres.

Through Childcare Partnerships, local councils may also commission private and voluntary centres to provide publicly funded preschool education places. Some councils also provide support for playgroups, run by parents or community volunteers.

Privately-run centres also offer ECEC independently, particularly for the children of working parents. In addition, some independent (private) schools run preschool education classes, and some employers offer day care facilities for the children of employees.⁴⁸

The majority of preschool education (which follows the Curriculum for Excellence) is provided by local councils or funded through partnerships with private/voluntary providers. In 2011, of a total of 2,705 providers, 1,542 (57%) were managed by the local council and 1,011 (37%) were private/voluntary partnerships which offered places funded by the local council.⁴⁹

2.7.4 Financing and costs

Almost all funding for the education system comes from the Scottish Government with expenditure administered by local authorities, although councils also raise some revenue for education. In 2010/11 (the most recent estimate) total annual expenditure on preschool by all local authorities in Scotland was about £318.3 million.⁵⁰

Local authorities decide how the overall grant from the Scottish Government is spent, which may include funding their own preschool centres or commissioning places from private or voluntary centres. Some local authorities also provide free

⁴⁸ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁹ Scottish Government, *Preschool Education Statistics*, September 2011.

⁵⁰ Correspondence from Scottish Government, 24 September 2012.

transport to facilitate access to ECEC in rural areas, although they are not required to do so.⁵¹

Public funding for ECEC is intended to ensure the provision of a free part-time preschool education for all three and four year olds as well as to assist local authorities with additional provision, such as services for children with particular need. Local authorities may charge reduced fees or provide free care for children on child protection registers, those with disabilities, or those whose families are on low incomes.⁵²

Parents may also purchase ECEC from public, private or voluntary providers in addition to what is statutorily provided. While the education system is devolved entirely to the Scottish Government, the UK welfare system provides subsidies for ECEC through the tax system to families in all UK nations. Depending on household income, under the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit parents can claim up to 70% (previously 80%) of a maximum of £175 of childcare expenses per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children. This means that the maximum amount of assistance a family with one child could receive per week is £122.50, while a family with two or more children could receive a maximum of £210 of assistance per week.⁵³

The credit is calculated based on the overall amount of Working Tax Credit the family is entitled to and is reduced as income increases. Those working fewer than 16 hours per week are not eligible, although this will no longer be the case under the new Universal Credit. Given these restrictions, few people are able to take advantage of support through the tax credit, as those living on very low incomes often do not meet the working hours requirements and income support tapers off sharply after a household earns about £750 per week (gross income).⁵⁴

Currently, benefit disregards (excluding childcare expenses from income for purposes of calculating Housing and Council Tax Benefit) are also in place to support very low income families. For 2011-2012 these disregards covered up to 85% of childcare costs for some very low income families. However, this will no longer be the case with the introduction of the Universal Credit.⁵⁵

Employers may also offer their employees childcare vouchers in exchange for a reduction in tax liability through Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemptions.⁵⁶ Until 2011, all parents were entitled to exemptions up to £55 per week, but this has been reduced for higher-rate taxpayers.⁵⁷

⁵¹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁵² Children in Scotland, *The cost of childcare in Scotland: a special report*, 2011. Available at: http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/html/pub_tshow.php?ref=PUB0362.

⁵³ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), 'Help with childcare costs – do you qualify for extra tax credits?', 2013. Available at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/start/who-qualifies/children/childcare-costs.htm>.

⁵⁴ Mulheirn, I. and Shorthouse, R. *The Parent Trap: illustrating the growing cost of childcare*. Social Market Foundation, 2011.

⁵⁵ Mulheirn, and Shorthouse, 2011.

⁵⁶ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), *Working Tax Credit – Help with the costs of childcare*, 2011. Available at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/wtc5.pdf>

⁵⁷ Mulheirn, and Shorthouse, 2011.

→ Simulating childcare support through these benefits for a two-parent family with two children where one earner works full-time and the other part-time, the Social Market Foundation estimated that a low income family (earning between £15,000-37,000/year) could receive a total of £3,675 in 2011-2012, a middle income family (£42,000-63,000) £900, and a high income family (above £63,000) £600.⁵⁸

UK-wide spending on ECEC is high – in 2007, the UK had the third highest spending (after Denmark and Sweden) on childcare and pre-primary education in the OECD at 1.1% of GDP.⁵⁹ Yet the cost of care to parents in the UK is high, particularly for very young children.

→ OECD estimates from 2008 suggest that net childcare costs (after benefits) make up 27% of family income.⁶⁰

In the UK in 2011, direct public spending (excluding tax expenditure) accounted for 12% of the funding for the day nursery market, corporate funding through employer vouchers 29% (of which almost half is funded through employee salary sacrifice), and other spending (charity, grants) 2%. Private individual payments made up 57%, of which about 22% is estimated to be subsidised through tax expenditures.⁶¹

→ Childcare costs in Scotland are among the highest in Britain for part-time places; parents pay nearly as much as parents in Southern England, but on lower incomes.⁶²

In particular, childminder costs for a child under two years and out-of-school club costs are higher than in England or Wales. From 2011-2012, childcare costs for childminders and for nursery care for under-tuos increased, while costs for nursery care for two year olds and over and for out-of-school clubs decreased. The cost of a private or non-profit nursery is higher (by almost £25 per week for 25 hours of care) than that of a local authority nursery. Costs vary widely across the geographical regions of Scotland, and this variation is greater than in other parts of the UK.⁶³

⁵⁸ The information on other income groups is not provided by Mulheim and Shorthouse, 2011.

⁵⁹ OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁶⁰ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008. OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁶¹ Blackburn, Philip, *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2012*, Laing and Buisson, Ltd. 11th ed, July 2012.

⁶² Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, *The Scottish Childcare Lottery*, 2012, Available at: <http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk>

⁶³ Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, 2012.

Box 2.6: Scottish ECEC costs – 25 hours per week⁶⁴

Nursery (for under 2): £101.49
Nursery (for 2 and over): £94.52
Childminder (under 2): £93.10
Childminder (2 and over): £92.04
Out-of-school club (15 hours): £48.55

Nurseries often charge either a full- or half-day rate. Costs for a full-time nursery place (whole-day, five days per week) were lowest in Scotland (£152/week) compared to the rest of the UK (£169/week). Nursery fees are higher among for-profit providers (£176/week) than public and non-profit providers (£146 and £140 respectively) across the UK⁶⁵

The cost of care for younger children, particularly under-twos, is higher due to restrictions on how many children a carer can look after at once. It has also been suggested that higher fees for under-twos are used to cover the costs of ECEC provision for older children, where subsidies do not fully cover the cost of providing these places. In a survey conducted by the National Day Nurseries Association, 72% of respondents reported that government funding does not cover the costs of an ECEC place.⁶⁶

2.8 Access levels and patterns of use

Children in the three to four year age range are most likely to be in some form of non-school formal ECEC, due to the entitlement to early years education. 96.1% of three to four year olds receive some free early education.⁶⁷ Children under one year are least likely to receive formal ECEC, which is likely due to the provision of maternity leave.

→ The most common type of formal provision is centre-based nursery care, particularly for preschool age children.

⁶⁴ Data for 2012, for 25 hours per week, unless otherwise specified. Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, 2012, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Blackburn, 2012.

⁶⁶ Children in Scotland, *The cost of childcare in Scotland: a special report*, 2011.

⁶⁷ The Scottish Government, *Statistical Bulletin 2012*. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00410232.pdf>

Table 2.1: Percentage of all children 0-15 registered in formal ECEC services, by age group

	Under 1 year	1 year	2-3 years	4-5 years	All 0-5 years	6 years	7-11 years	12-15 years	All children
Childminder	1.6	6.5	7.0	5.7	5.6	4.5	2.8	0.2	3.3
Children/Family Centre	0.8	1.8	3.8	2.5	2.6	0.4	0.2	0.1	1.1
Crèche	2.6	3.9	5.1	5.2	4.5	3.2	0.9	0.1	2.2
Holiday play scheme	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
Nursery	4.9	20.8	49.2	51.6	37.8	2.1	1.1	0.1	15.2
Out-of-school club	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	1.8	12.1	9.9	0.6	4.5
Playgroup	0.3	0.3	6.8	1.5	2.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	1.1
Other	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2
<i>All services</i>	<i>10.2</i>	<i>33.5</i>	<i>72.2</i>	<i>72.7</i>	<i>55.5</i>	<i>23.3</i>	<i>15.5</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>28.0</i>
<i>All excluding childminding</i>	<i>8.6</i>	<i>26.9</i>	<i>65.3</i>	<i>67.0</i>	<i>49.9</i>	<i>18.7</i>	<i>12.7</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>24.7</i>

Source: Care Inspectorate, *Childcare Statistics 2011, 2012*.

Note: These figures do not include children attending primary school. The percentage for 4-5 year olds, for example, will reflect the fact that many children of this age group are in school rather than an ECEC service.

→ The use of informal care, particularly care by grandparents is widespread.

Such care is especially common among lone parents and families on low incomes.

Almost a third of Scottish families use multiple care arrangements.⁶⁸

Older children, disabled children, children who live in rural areas and whose parents work atypical hours are all more likely to face issues of accessibility to care services.⁶⁹

ECEC provision for vulnerable two year olds has recently been expanded so that looked after two year olds could receive free early education and childcare provision (since April 2012).⁷⁰

2.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

2.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

Inspection

→ Two separate agencies are responsible for the regulation and inspection of ECEC services in Scotland – Education Scotland for education services and the Care Inspectorate for childcare services.

⁶⁸ Scottish Government, *Growing up in Scotland: Multiple Childcare Provision and its Effect on Child Outcomes*, 2009. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/03/13143410/6>

⁶⁹ Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, 2012.

⁷⁰ Scottish Government, 'Free childcare for vulnerable children,' 2011. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2011/12/21140320>

Education Scotland inspects education services, including voluntary and private preschool centres, nursery schools and family centres and nursery classes within schools, which provide the Curriculum for Excellence. Following an inspection, Education Scotland publishes a letter to parents reporting the quality of education provision within the centre.⁷¹

The Care Inspectorate is responsible for the regulation of a wide range of care and social work services, including childcare. These services are inspected to ensure that they follow the National Care Standards. The National Care Standards specify required staff-child ratios (see below).

Table 2.2 Staff: Child ratios

<i>For care on non-domestic premises (e.g. centre-based care)</i>	
Under 2s	1:3
2s	1:5
3 and over*	1:8
8 or over	1:10
<i>For care on domestic premises (e.g. childminders)</i>	
Under 12 years**	1:6

Source: National Care Standards, *Early education and childcare up to the age of 16. Annex A*, 2012.

*For children 3 and over attending for less than 4 continuous hours, the ratio may be 1:10.

**No more than 3 children may be under school-age, no more than 1 child may be under 1 year, including the childminder's children.

National curriculum

→ Curriculum for Excellence is Scotland's curriculum for children and young people age three to 18.

Preschool establishments and schools have been implementing the Curriculum for Excellence from 2010/11. Although there is no curriculum for children below three years per se, 'Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families' provides further guidance for those working with younger children.⁷²

Curriculum for Excellence is designed to develop four 'capacities' in young people: becoming successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children are expected to achieve Experiences and Outcomes in eight areas:

- Expressive Arts
- Languages and Literacy
- Religious and Moral Education
- Social Studies
- Mathematics and Numeracy

⁷¹ Education Scotland, 'Early Years: Regulation and Inspection,' 2012. Available at: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyears/about/qa/index.asp>

⁷² Scottish Government, 'Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families', 2010. Available at: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/earlyyears/prebirthtothree/nationalguidance/index.asp>

- Sciences
- Technologies
- Health and Well-being

These Experiences and Outcomes are presented within a framework of levels for different ages, with the early level spanning both preschool and early primary school for children age three to six. 'Building the Curriculum 2 - Active Learning in the Early Years' (2007) sets out the principles for early education within the Curriculum for Excellence. The early level is intended to promote similar types of learning and encourage continuity during the transition to school. The emphasis is on 'active learning' through play and life experiences. Each preschool establishment/school is responsible for deciding how much time is devoted to each of the different curriculum areas, in line with local authority guidance. Preschool staff are increasingly providing written reports for parents and primary schools regarding each child's progress.⁷³

2.9.2 Workforce qualifications

Similar to other areas of the UK, the Scottish ECEC workforce is split according to whether the workers provide education or care services. Those working within early education are considered teachers and usually have higher level qualifications, and better pay and working conditions, whereas carers tend to have lower level qualifications, and worse pay and working conditions.

As in most countries, workers in early education and childcare in Scotland are overwhelmingly female. 93% of preschool teachers, 95% of preschool education and day care staff and 99% of childminders are women.⁷⁴

Teachers are required to register with the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS). They must be university graduates with a relevant degree and a teaching qualification at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) 9 or higher. Once registered, all GTCS primary teachers are qualified to teach children between the ages of three to twelve.

In 2012, 65% of three and four year old children who attended a preschool centre across Scotland had regular access to a GTCS registered teacher with an additional 9.7% having access to a teacher on an ad hoc basis.⁷⁵

Non-teachers in early years settings must register with the Scottish Social Services Council, which distinguishes three categories of worker: 'support worker' (e.g. nursery assistants, breakfast club assistants), 'practitioner' (e.g. nursery nurses), and 'lead practitioner/manager' who manage settings. All early years staff are required to possess or be working toward a relevant qualification; however, few early years workers have university degrees and many do not have childcare qualifications above Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level 3 in Early Years Care and Education (practitioner level). Managers, who are not qualified teachers, working in children's centres are required to attain degree level Childhood Practice

⁷³ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁷⁴ Scottish Government, *Preschool and Childcare Statistics 2010*, 2010.

⁷⁵ The Scottish Government, *Statistical Bulletin* 2012, p. 16. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00410232.pdf>.

qualifications. Childminders must register with the Care Inspectorate and are not required to hold specific qualifications.⁷⁶

Table 2.3: Qualifications of the ECEC workforce

	Preschool education and day care staff	Childminders
Any childcare qualification	84%	34%
Any childcare qualification at SVQ2 or above	82%	32%
Any childcare qualification at SVQ3 or above	74%	27%

Source: Scottish Government. 'Preschool and Childcare Statistics 2010.'

Teachers' salaries are negotiated through the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) so teachers have very standardised forms of pay and working conditions compared to other workers in early years settings and generally receive higher wages.⁷⁷

The median hourly pay for childcare workers employed by the local authority or voluntary sector was £6 in 2005.⁷⁸ The median hourly pay for childcare workers employed in the private sector was slightly higher at £7.

2.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy⁷⁹

1976 Statutory maternity leave of 40 weeks introduced in UK

1989 Children Act reforms registration of childcare services

1995 Children Act places a duty on local authorities to provide services for children in need

1997 Labour elected to the UK government; ECEC becomes a policy priority

1998 Scotland Act establishes Scottish Parliament and Executive; Scottish Child Care Strategy introduced; UK-wide childcare tax credit introduced

1999 Introduction of unpaid parental leave and time off for dependants

1999 Scottish Parliament opened; Minister for Education & Children established

2000 Standards in Scotland's Schools Act places a duty on local authorities to

⁷⁶ Children in Scotland, *Early childhood education and care: developing a fully integrated system*, 2011. Available at: http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/docs/CIS_ECECSpecialReport2_001.pdf

⁷⁷ Children in Scotland, *Early childhood education and care: developing a fully integrated system*, 2011.

⁷⁸ Scottish Executive, *Preschool and Childcare Workforce Statistics 2005*, February 2006. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/93905/0022592.pdf> Note: Although there are more recent publications on the workforce, they do not report pay.

⁷⁹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

secure a preschool education place for all three and four-year-olds

- 2001 Regulation of Care Act establishes the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care
- 2003 Introduction of paternity leave and the right to request flexible working
- 2004 Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act 2004
- 2008 Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) publish joint Early Years Framework; Publication of *Getting it Right for Every Child*
- 2008 Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act 2008
- 2010 Public Service Reform Act replaces the Care Commission with the Care Inspectorate
- 2010 Curriculum for Excellence introduced
- 2011 Introduction of additional paternity leave and pay

2.11 Conclusion

The Scottish ECEC system is integrated in terms of governance, but it is a split system on the level of service provision. There is a policy division between the educational and childcare service aspects of ECEC. The part-time nature of the largely publicly provided educational provision presumes privately arranged childcare in addition, should more than one of the parents be employed. In sum, for the early years, parental care followed by informal care can be said to be the predominant forms of childcare in Scotland, supplemented by private (for-profit and voluntary) and public formal childcare.

ECEC provision is a mixed economy in Scotland including public and private funding and provision, but with a strong dominance of private for-profit providers. Public expenditure on ECEC is high, as are ECEC costs to private individuals, relative to other EU countries.

In 2013 a new Children and Young People bill is to be introduced, which aims to improve the availability of ECEC. Part of the bill is a proposal to increase the number of funded preschool hours from 475 to 600 hours of early learning and childcare per year and to extend provision to looked-after two year olds.

3 COUNTRY REPORT: ENGLAND⁸⁰

3.1 Key findings

- In terms of governance, ECEC is integrated across educational and childcare provision, but not with policy responsibility for parental and other leave. However, not all early years services follow the educational framework.
- ECEC provision is not available as a continuous entitlement to provision from birth to school, but only for limited hours from ages three until school age.
- Across the UK, public expenditure on social protection makes up 28% of GDP. In 2007 3.6% of GDP was directed toward family benefits. 0.7% of GDP was spent on preschool education and 0.4% on childcare, for a total of about 1.1% of GDP.
- With the transition to Universal Credit, the UK benefit system is currently undergoing a period of reform. From 2013, the Universal Credit will replace tax credits and housing benefits previously available to families with children.
- Parental leave in England is unpaid.
- Early education and childcare in England encompasses a wide range of services. Formal provision includes nurseries (day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes), playgroups, children or family centres and childminding. Many children are also looked after informally by, grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers.
- ECEC is a mixed economy financed by the state and by private individuals on both a voluntary and for-profit basis.
- Ofsted is responsible for registering and inspecting ECEC settings - public provision, independent for-profit and non-profit provision and home-based childcare - to ensure that they comply with statutory requirements and standards.
- As of January 2012, 96% of three and four year olds (1.3 million) received some free early education, up from 95% (1.2 million) in 2011.
- Similar to other aspects of ECEC in England, the characteristics of the workforce in terms of qualifications and pay is split according to whether the work is considered to be care or education. Teachers working within early education usually have higher level qualifications, better pay and working conditions whereas 'carers' tend to have lower level qualifications and worse pay and working conditions.

⁸⁰ We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support from Rosalyn Harper and colleagues from the Department for Education for this chapter.

3.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ In terms of governance, ECEC is integrated across educational and childcare provision, but not with policy responsibility for parental and other leave. However, not all early years services follow the educational framework.

England has a national ECEC agenda. This came to the fore with the election of the Labour government in 1997, which asserted an active role for the state in promoting formal early education and care services for young children. The current coalition government maintains such an ECEC agenda.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, growth in maternal employment spurred the development of commercial forms of care services. ECEC policy continues to actively encourage the expansion of market-based care through direct government subsidies. English ECEC policy has emphasised regulated private voluntarily and particularly market provided childcare, alongside nursery schools and nursery classes in the maintained sector, as a way of preserving flexibility and individual choice for parents. At the same time, there has been an emphasis on the educational dimension of ECEC, particularly with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which includes specific learning goals and achievement by preschool age children.

→ ECEC provision is not available as a continuous entitlement to provision from birth to school, but only for limited hours from ages three until school age.

Early education is seen as beneficial for all children nearing school-age (age three-five) regardless of whether their parents are full-time carers or not. Childcare (for younger children and for children generally outwith educational hours) is regarded more as a service for employed parents, who are thus unavailable to care full-time for their children themselves.

3.3 Socio-economic context

The most recent census estimated that there were a total of 53 million English residents, with 3.3 million children below the age of five years.⁸¹ 18.9% of the English population is under 16 years, while 16.3% of the population is 65 years or older.⁸² The population density is 401 inhabitants per km².⁸³

The most recent statistics indicate that the total fertility rate is 1.93.⁸⁴ 5.0% of all live births were to women under 20 years of age in 2010.⁸⁵ Lone parent families make up 7% of all households.⁸⁶ 15.7% of English children lived in workless households in

⁸¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS), *Statistical bulletin: 2011 Census - Population and Household Estimates for England and Wales*, March 2011.

⁸² Data from 2011. ONS, *2011 Census, Population and Household Estimates for England and Wales*, July 2012.

⁸³ Data from 2010. ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Key Statistics*, February 2012.

⁸⁴ Data from 2011. ONS, *Births and Deaths in England and Wales, 2011*, October 2012.

⁸⁵ Includes Wales. ONS, *Birth Summary Tables, England and Wales, 2011*.

⁸⁶ Data from 2010. ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Social Indicators*, February 2012.

2010.⁸⁷ 10% of children lived in households with income below 60% of the median for at least three of the four years between 2005-2008.⁸⁸

Box 3.1: Summary of key population statistics⁸⁹

Total fertility rate: 1.93

Teenage births: 5.0%

Lone parent families: 7%

Child population: 18.9%

Children under 16 living in workless households: 15.7%

Child poverty rate: 10%

3.4 Employment patterns

In England, the overall employment rate for 2012 was 70.7% of those age 16-64; the unemployment rate was 8.3% for those age 16 and over.⁹⁰ The employment rate for men age 16-64 was 75.6% and for women 65.3%.⁹¹ A greater proportion of women work part-time than do men: 11.3% of employed men work part-time and 42.1% of employed women work part time.⁹²

Data on parental employment patterns is available at the UK level only (not separately for Scotland or England). Employment rates for mothers and fathers with a child under six were 59.4% and 88.0% respectively. Employment rates for mothers and fathers with a child age six to eleven increased slightly to 71.9% and 89.5% respectively. 58% of women and 6-7% of men with children age eleven and under work part-time.⁹³

⁸⁷ ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Social Indicators*, February 2012.

⁸⁸ Children living in households with income below 60% of the median for at least three years from 2005-2008. Scottish Government, *Key Scottish income and poverty figures*, 2008-2009.

⁸⁹ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁹⁰ Data from 2012. ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Key Statistics*, August 2012.

⁹¹ ONS, *Region and Country Profiles: Economy*, May 2012.

⁹² Data from 2008-2009. ONS, *Regional Trends Online*, March 2010.

⁹³ Data for 2011. Eurostat.

Box 3.2: Summary of employment statistics⁹⁴

Total employment rate: 70.7%
Total unemployment rate: 8.3%
Women's employment rate: 65.3%
Men's employment rate: 75.6%
Employed women working part-time: 42.1%
Employed men working part-time: 11.3%
Mothers' employment rate: 59.4%
Fathers' employment rate: 88.0%

3.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children

In 2009-2010, total public expenditure on services for England was £442 billion, or £8,531 per head.⁹⁵ £179.4 billion was spent on social protection (£3,462 per head), of which £24.7 billion was spent on children and families (£477 per head). £73 billion was spent on education (£1,409 per head), of which £4.3 billion (£84 per head) was directed toward preschool education for children under five years.⁹⁶

→ Across the UK, public expenditure on social protection makes up 28% of GDP.⁹⁷ In 2007 3.6% of GDP was directed toward family benefits.⁹⁸ 0.7% of GDP was spent on preschool education and 0.4% on childcare, for a total of about 1.1% of GDP.⁹⁹

Box 3.3: Summary of public expenditure (England)

Total public expenditure on services: £442 billion
On social protection: £179.4 billion
On children and families: £24.7 billion
On preschool education: £4.3 billion

UK-wide social security schemes include:

- National Insurance, which provides cash benefits for sickness, unemployment, death of a partner, retirement, etc. People earn entitlement to these benefits by paying National Insurance contributions;
- the National Health Service (NHS), which provides medical, dental and optical treatment and which is normally available free of charge only to people who live in Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

⁹⁴ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁹⁵ 'Per head' refers to all persons in the population.

⁹⁶ HM Treasury, 'Section 4 Country and Regional Analyses,' *Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2011*, 2011.

⁹⁷ Data from 2010. Eurostat Country Profiles – United Kingdom.

⁹⁸ OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁹⁹ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011.

- the child benefit and tax credit schemes, which provide cash benefits for UK nationals bringing up children;
- non-contributory benefits for certain categories of disabled persons or carers;
- other statutory payments made by employers to employees when a child is born or placed for adoption.

Families with children are generally eligible for Child Benefit if they are UK nationals. Child Benefit is currently £20.30 for the eldest child and a further £13.40 for each subsequent child per week. Since January 2013, Child Benefit has been removed from higher rate tax payers (and their partners).

Child Tax Credit is an income-related payment to support families with one or more children under age 16, or up to age 20 if the child is in full-time education or training.

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit provides a means-tested benefit for families to offset the cost of purchasing childcare.

→ With the transition to Universal Credit, the UK benefit system is currently undergoing a period of reform. From 2013, the Universal Credit will replace child tax credits and housing benefits previously available to families with children.

3.6 Leave policies for families with small children¹⁰⁰

3.6.1 Structure

Most leave policies have been introduced relatively recently. There is no difference between England and the rest of the UK regarding leave provision. There is maternity, paternity and parental leave provision. Maternity leave is for 52 weeks, and this can start from eleven weeks before the expected birth date. A mother can choose to return to employment from two weeks after childbirth. Up to ten 'keep in touch' days can be worked without affecting maternity leave or pay. After the first 20 weeks, the remaining maternity leave can be transferred to her partner (husband, partner, biological father, civil partner) if she returns to employment. The leave then becomes additional paternity leave and is for a minimum of two weeks and maximum of 26 weeks. Paternity leave is for two weeks and must be taken within the first 56 days of the baby's birth.

Parental leave is available as an individual right (i.e. per parent per child), for thirteen weeks up to the child's fifth birthday, with a maximum of four weeks leave to be taken in any one calendar year.

→ Parental leave in England is unpaid.

3.6.2 Payment and funding

Statutory maternity leave is paid at 90% of a woman's average earnings for six weeks with no ceiling and a flat rate payment of either £135.45 or 90% of average

¹⁰⁰ This section draws heavily from the work of O'Brien, M., 'United Kingdom,' in P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies* and related research, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012.

gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for 33 weeks. The remaining 13 weeks are unpaid. It is paid by employers who claim back from the taxation agency and financed by National Insurance Contributions from employers and employees. Additional paternity leave is compensated according to the same formula. Paternity leave is a flat-rate payment as for maternity leave, funded in the same way. Parental leave is unpaid.

3.6.3 *Role of employer*

All employees who have worked for their employer continuously for 26 weeks, into the fifteenth week before the week the baby is due, are eligible for statutory maternity pay or additional paternity leave (APL), as outlined above. Also, those on APL must have remained employed into the week before the leave is due to start.

Many employers make additional provisions that go beyond the statutory minimum for maternity leave. A minority of employers go beyond the statutory minimum for paternity leave. Employers may postpone granting parental leave for up to six months where leave-taking would cause significant disruption to the business.

Employers have a legal duty to consider requests from employees to work flexibly, and may refuse them only where there is a clear business case for doing so. Employers may also take 'a reasonable' amount of time off work to deal with emergencies.

3.6.4 *Uptake of leave*

Survey data from 2009/10 suggests that the mean length of maternity leave taken by women was 39 weeks in 2008. Less than half of mothers used the remaining period of unpaid leave. The same survey suggested that 91% of fathers took some time off around their baby's birth, though 23% did not use statutory paternity leave. There are no available administrative statistics for take up of statutory parental leave or additional paternity leave.

3.7 National framework of ECEC

The English ECEC model shares an approach with the Scottish model, which separates 'education' from 'care'. This ECEC model is characterised by a focus on free preschool education for three to five year olds in publicly funded part-time settings, alongside childcare, particularly for the under-threes, that is provided predominantly by informal carers or private for-profit companies. There is no link between the universal preschool entitlement that starts the summer following a child's third birthday and maternity and parental leave which ends after a year. Working parents have no guarantee of an ECEC place for their child following maternity/paternity leave, to support their employment. However, in England local authorities have a statutory obligation to ensure sufficient childcare places for working parents. There is ongoing reform in the English ECEC system to expand the free preschool entitlement to vulnerable two-year olds and to allow for more flexible use of the 15 hour entitlement to support parental employment.

3.7.1 Governance

The UK Government in Westminster is responsible for UK-wide policies which are directly relevant to ECEC, such as leave policies and funding through the tax system, as well as specific ECEC policy and funding for England. ECEC falls under the responsibility of the national Department for Education, though much of it is administered locally by England's local authorities.

3.7.2 Types of services

→ Early education and childcare in England encompasses a wide range of services. Formal provision includes nurseries (day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes), playgroups, children or family centres and childminding. Many children are also looked after informally by, grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers.

Formal provision includes day nurseries, pre-schools and playgroups, nursery and reception classes, Children's Centres, and childminding. Many children are also looked after informally by grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other home carers such as au pairs (the latter of these are sometimes classified as formal care in English surveys). There are also special services for school-age children, which provide 'wrap-around' care before and after school hours.

Box 3.4: Types of services¹⁰¹

Day nursery: centre-based care for children under five years

Playgroup/preschool: usually part-time for children between two and four years

Nursery class/nursery school: class in primary school for three-four year olds, usually part-time

Reception class: first year of primary school, may take four year olds

Children's Centre: multi-purpose centre for children and their families, including ECEC

Childminding: family day care for children of all ages

Home carers: family, friend, neighbour care; nannies

School-age childcare: out-of-school group-based care

3.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

Although ECEC has been administratively integrated in England – within the Department for Education – a split between early education and care remains in terms of the types of provision and the nature of the workforce. Public provision is relatively higher in education, and care is almost entirely provided privately either for-

¹⁰¹ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: United Kingdom,' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.

profit or by volunteers. More childcare is informally provided than via formal provision.¹⁰²

Public provision is usually for children age three and over through nursery schools, or nursery classes and reception classes in primary schools. A reception class is the first year of primary school and is usually a full school day. The compulsory school age is five years, but children are entitled to begin school from the September following their fourth birthday.¹⁰³ Nursery classes, by contrast, are usually part-time (around 15 hours per week), which corresponds with the free entitlement. While nursery classes are provided through schools, others are provided in or through children's centres, which offer integrated ECEC services in particular for disadvantaged children and their families. There are also some publicly-provided nursery schools for three to four year olds which are run by local authorities, mostly as part of children's centres.

Private provision of ECEC is very common – mainly through privately run day nurseries. Childminding is often operated as a small family business whereas pre-schools and playgroups are usually run by non-profit organisations such as community, church or parent groups. There are some private schools which provide nursery education, but the majority of school provision is publicly funded. Children under three years are almost entirely served by private for-profit or voluntary provision, as much care happens outside of normal school hours.

Table 3.1: Number of ECEC providers in 2011¹⁰⁴

Total providers	107,900
Childcare providers	92,200
Full day care	17,600
of which in children's centres	550
Sessional	7,900
After-school clubs	10,000
Holiday clubs	7,900
Childminders – working	48,800
Childminders – registered	57,500
Early years providers in maintained schools	15,700
Nursery schools	400
Primary schools with nursery and reception classes	6,700
Primary schools with reception but not nursery classes	8,600

¹⁰² Bryson et al, 2012, *The Role of Informal Childcare*, Report for the Nuffield Foundation. Available at http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/The_role_of_informal_childcare_FULL_REPORT.pdf

¹⁰³ Department for Education, *Provision for children under five years of age in England*, January 2012. Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001074/index.shtml>

¹⁰⁴ Department for Education, 2012, *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2011*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167900/osr18-2012v2.pdf.pdf

Of formal care (day care centres, children's centres, sessional care/playgroups) 59% is provided on a commercial basis, 30% by non-profit organisations and 12% publicly.¹⁰⁵

Of three and four year olds benefiting from some free early education, 32% received this in reception classes in a maintained primary school, 27% from a nursery school or a nursery class in a primary school, 3% from an independent school, and 32% from a for- or non-profit provider.¹⁰⁶

3.7.4 Financing and costs

As ECEC in England is a mixed economy, it is partly financed by the state and partly by private individuals and organisations. Under the free Early Years Entitlement (EYE), the central government provides funding to local authorities to ensure that every three and four year old has access to a part-time nursery education. This funding is passed on to various providers, both public and private, to cover the costs of a nursery place for each child for up to 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year. The Early Years Entitlement has also been extended on a trial basis to some two year olds who are living in disadvantaged areas, with a view to this being extended to 'average' rather than 'disadvantaged' two year olds. Over 60% of the EYE is available through the state education sector, while the rest is provided through the market at a fixed subsidy rate.¹⁰⁷ In addition, school-based provision, children's centres and local authority provision for children in high need are all state-funded.

→ ECEC is a mixed economy financed by the state and by private individuals on both a voluntary and for-profit basis.

Given the age limits and part-time nature of the EYE, and the targeted nature of most other public provision, many parents purchase additional hours of ECEC, part of which may be subsidised through Working Tax Credit, depending on household income, or through employer vouchers (though this is due to be reformed in 2013). Depending on household income, under the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit parents can claim up to 70% (previously 80%) of a maximum of £175 of childcare expenses per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children. This means that the maximum amount of assistance a family with one child could receive per week is £122.50, while a family with two or more children could receive a maximum of £210 of assistance per week.¹⁰⁸

The credit is calculated based on the overall amount of Working Tax Credit the family is entitled to and is reduced as income increases. Those working fewer than 16 hours per week are not eligible, although this will no longer be the case under the new Universal Credit. Given these restrictions, few people are able to take advantage of support through the tax credit, as those living on very low incomes

¹⁰⁵ May not add to 100% due to rounding. Brind et al., *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010*, Department for Education, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Department for Education, *Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England*, January 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Blackburn, P., 'Future directions for a mature UK childcare market.' In E. Lloyd and H. Penn (eds.) *Childcare Markets: can they deliver an equitable service?* Bristol: The Policy Press, 2012, p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), 'Help with childcare costs – do you qualify for extra tax credits?', 2013. Available at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/start/who-qualifies/children/childcare-costs.htm>

often do not meet the working hours requirements and income support tapers off sharply after a household earns about £750 per week (gross income).¹⁰⁹

Currently, benefit disregards (excluding childcare expenses from income for purposes of calculating Housing and Council Tax Benefit) are also in place to support very low income families. For 2011-2012 these disregards covered up to 85% of childcare costs for some very low income families. However, this will no longer be the case with the introduction of the Universal Credit.¹¹⁰

Employers may also offer their employees childcare vouchers in exchange for a reduction in tax liability through Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemptions.¹¹¹ Until 2011 all parents were entitled to exemptions up to £55 per week, but this has been reduced for higher-rate taxpayers.¹¹²

Simulating childcare support through these benefits for a two-parent family with two children where one earner works full-time and the other part-time, the Social Market Foundation estimated that a low income family (earning between £15,000-£37,000/year) could receive a total of £3,675 in 2011-2012, a middle income family (£42,000-£63,000) £900, and a high income family (above £63,000) £600.

UK-wide spending on ECEC is high – in 2007, the UK had the third highest spending (after Denmark and Sweden) on childcare and pre-primary education in the OECD at 1.1% of GDP (separate figures for England are not available).¹¹³ Yet the cost of care to parents is high, particularly for very young children.

OECD estimates from 2008 suggest that net childcare costs (after benefits) make up 27% of family income.¹¹⁴

In the UK, direct public spending in 2011 (excluding tax expenditure) accounted for 12% of the funding for the day nursery market, corporate funding through employer vouchers 29% (of which almost half is funded through employee salary sacrifice), and other spending (charity, grants) 2%. Private individual payments made up 57%, of which about 22% is estimated to be subsidised through tax expenditures.¹¹⁵

In England in 2012, the average local authority funding per hour of an early years entitlement place was £3.68 for three and four year olds and £4.70 for two year olds (about 22% of English nurseries provide the EYE for two year olds).¹¹⁶ The Laing &

¹⁰⁹ Mulheim, I. and Shorthouse, R. *The Parent Trap: illustrating the growing cost of childcare*. Social Market Foundation, 2011.

¹¹⁰ Mulheim, and Shorthouse, 2011.

¹¹¹ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), *Working Tax Credit – Help with the costs of childcare*, 2011. Available at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/wtc5.pdf>

¹¹² Mulheim, and Shorthouse, 2011.

¹¹³ OECD Family Database, OECD, 2011.

¹¹⁴ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008. OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, 2011.

¹¹⁵ Blackburn, P., *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2012*, Laing and Buisson, Ltd. 11th ed, July 2012.

¹¹⁶ Blackburn, *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2012*, July 2012.

Buisson market survey has consistently found that providers make a loss when they deliver these places, which must be subsidised with profit-making in other areas.¹¹⁷

As of 2011, in England average yearly expenditure on childcare was £5,028 for 25 hours of nursery care per week, for a child under two. The most expensive nursery reported cost parents £11 per hour. The Childcare Costs survey 2011 from which these figures are drawn, noted that childcare costs had typically increased by more than the average wage.¹¹⁸

Box 3.5: English ECEC costs per week¹¹⁹
Nursery (for under twos): £103.19
Nursery (for two and over): £98.75
Childminder (under twos): £92.61
Childminder (two and over): £91.83
Out-of-school club (15 hours): £45.81

Fees for a full-time nursery place (whole-day, five days/week), are higher in all the regions of England than in other parts of the UK.¹²⁰

Childcare prices across provider types have risen since 2011, though the highest increase was 6.7% for nursery for under-tuos, followed by nursery for over twos at 5.1%. Out of school clubs increased the least at 1.7%. For-profit nurseries tend to be slightly more expensive, but the gap between them and nurseries run by local authorities is small.¹²¹

3.8 Access levels and patterns of use

As of January 2012, 96% of three and four year olds (1.3 million) received some free early education, up from 95% (1.2 million) in 2011. 93% of three year olds and 98% of four year olds received some free early education. The vast majority of children have access to this education. Take up of the entitlement is lower among families living in the most deprived quartile compared to those living in the least deprived quartile. Children of Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi mothers are substantially less likely to receive free early years provision than the children of white mothers.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Blackburn, *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2012*, July 2012.

¹¹⁸ Daycare Trust, *Summary of the Childcare Costs Survey 2011*.

¹¹⁹ Data for 2012, for 25 hours per week, unless otherwise specified. Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, *The Scottish Childcare Lottery*, 2012.

¹²⁰ Blackburn, *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2012*, July 2012.

¹²¹ Daycare Trust and Children in Scotland, *The Scottish Childcare Lottery*, 2012.

¹²² Department for Education, *Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England*, January 2012.

Box 3.6: Summary of ECEC enrolment by age (under 12)¹²³

Formal provision:¹²⁴ 0-2 (39%), 3-4 (84%), 5-7 (54%), 8-11 (50%)

Informal provision:¹²⁵ 0-2 (33%), 3-4 (27%), 5-7 (28%), 8-11 (28%)

Parents only: 0-2 (41%), 3-4 (11%), 5-7 (31%), 8-11 (33%)

Median hours per week in any ECEC: 0-2 (18.2), 3-4 (23), 5-7 (5.5), 8-11 (4)

Up to 2010, the free entitlement consisted of up to 12.5 hours per week. All children became eligible for 15 hours a week from 2011. Not all children access the full entitlement.¹²⁶ The part-time equivalent number of free early education places (15 hours) taken up by three year olds was 596,400, or 89% of three year olds. For four year olds, the figure was 633,100, or 97%.¹²⁷

In 2010, survey estimates were that 78% of all families in England with children under 15 years had used some form of childcare – which would translate into roughly 5.7 million children in slightly over four million families in the population. 61% of these families used formal childcare and/or early years provision and 40% used informal childcare. The use of formal care was most common among three and four year olds (83%) and informal care was most common among children under three years (34%).¹²⁸ Children in couple families, working families and families with higher income were all more likely to use formal childcare than were lone parents, workless families or low income families.¹²⁹

Children who received childcare spent an average of 8.3 hours there (median) per week. The median amount of free entitlement hours received by three- and four-year-olds was 15 hours. Preschool children spent more time in childcare than school-age children, since the latter spend much of their time in school rather than ECEC. Preschool children spent an average of 20.5 hours per week in care compared to an average of 5 hours for school-age children (see table 3.2). This highlights that most childcare is parental childcare.

¹²³ Smith et al, 2012.

¹²⁴ Formal ECEC in the English statistics includes: nursery schools, nursery classes, reception classes, day nurseries, playgroups, breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, childminders, nannies and babysitters. The figures here are slightly higher than what would be the case with the OECD definition of formal ECEC provision according to which nannies and babysitters count as informal, not formal ECEC. However, this form of ECEC only makes up 2% of total childcare use in England.

¹²⁵ Informal includes: family (grandparents, older siblings, etc.), friends, neighbours.

¹²⁶ The difference in overall participation in free early education and full 15 hour take-up can be explained by the fact that not all three and four year olds are attending ECEC settings every day of the week. For example, a three year old who is in a nursery class four days a week will usually only take up 12 hours of the 15 hour entitlement (three hours per day).

¹²⁷ Department for Education, *Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England*, January 2012.

¹²⁸ Following the OECD definition adopted in this report, nannies are here counted as informal ECEC.

¹²⁹ Smith et al., 2012.

Table 3.2: Hours in childcare per week by age of child

	Age 0-2	Age 3-4	All preschool children	Age 5-7	Age 8-11	Age 12-14	All school-age children	All
Any childcare								
Median	18.2	23.0	20.5	5.5	4.0	4.8	5.0	8.3
Formal childcare								
Median	16.5	18.0	17.9	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.0	6.0
Informal childcare								
Median	10.9	8.0	9.5	5.0	4.5	6.5	5.0	6.0

Source: Smith et al, 2012.

3.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

3.9.1 *Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance*

In England, Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) is the non-ministerial government department responsible for the inspection and regulation of children's services and education.

→ Ofsted is responsible for registering and inspecting ECEC settings - public provision, independent for-profit and non-profit provision and home-based childcare - to ensure that they comply with statutory requirements and standards.

However, the legislation governing the inspection of private for-profit and voluntary settings differs from that which governs the inspection of ECEC provided by nursery schools and nursery classes within primary schools.

For independent (non-state) provision, Ofsted holds two registers for providers – the Early Years Register, which is compulsory for those looking after children from birth to five years, and the Childcare Register, which is compulsory for those looking after children from five to eight years.

Providers must meet minimum requirements in terms of health and safety, group sizes and child-staff ratios, and staff qualifications. Newly registered providers are inspected within a short period of registration and again at least once within three years. Although there is no legal requirement, providers are also encouraged to complete a self-evaluation.

3.9.2 *Workforce qualifications*

Overall the early education and care workforce is predominantly made up of women. Only about 1-2% of the workforce is male across the whole of the UK. Day care workers tend to be very young (30% are under 25), while childminders tend to be older (65% are over 40).¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Moss and Bennet, 2010.

→ Similar to other aspects of ECEC in England, the characteristics of the workforce in terms of qualifications and pay is split according to whether the work is considered to be care or education. Teachers working in early education usually have higher level qualifications, better pay and working conditions whereas other childcare workers have lower level qualifications and worse pay and working conditions.

This difference also tends to reflect a public/private-voluntary split, given the higher level of public provision in early education compared to care. Public sector workers tend to have much higher levels of union membership than do private sector workers.¹³¹

Government policy has aimed to encourage all those working with children under eight years to achieve at least a level three (upper secondary) qualification. Childminders are not required to hold any qualification but must complete an approved course prior to working with children.

In 2011 78% of all paid ECEC staff were qualified to at least level three and 15% were qualified to at least level six (honours degree level). Staff in early years provision in maintained schools had higher qualifications than childcare staff. 82% of staff in the early years sector were qualified to at least level three and 42% to at least level six. Many such staff are required to hold higher qualifications, such as a National Nursery Examination Board diploma for nursery nurses or a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education for early years teachers, as a condition of employment.¹³²

90% of staff in full day care provided by children's centres held at least a level three qualification; 84% of all full day care staff, 78% in sessional care, 75% in holiday clubs, 69% in after school clubs, and 59% of childminders were similarly qualified. 88% of staff in nursery schools, 85% of those in primary schools with nursery and reception classes and 77% of those in primary schools with reception but no nursery classes were qualified to at least level three.¹³³

Within childcare settings the highest proportion of staff holding at least a level six qualification were found in children's centres with full day care at 21%. 11% of other full day care staff had similar qualifications. In all other childcare settings (including childminders) fewer than 10% of staff held a qualification of at least level six. 45% of staff in primary schools with reception but no nursery classes, 41% in primary schools with nursery and reception classes, and 34% of staff in nursery schools were similarly qualified. Staff in these settings are more likely to be qualified teachers, which requires degree-level qualifications.¹³⁴

In 2007, a new professional status for early years providers was introduced by the UK government for use in England – the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). The EYPS was commissioned by the government and developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). Providers with this qualification are intended to work in leadership positions in formal care settings. EYPS does not set a particular pay scale.

¹³¹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

¹³² Brind et al., 2012

¹³³ Brind et al., 2012

¹³⁴ Brind et al., 2012

Pay in the sector is low. In 2011 the average hourly wage ranged from £7.80 for full day care staff (including managers) to £11.30 for staff in children's centres. This is less than the national average hourly wage at £14.76.¹³⁵

3.10 Historical overview of ECEC Policy¹³⁶

1870 Education Act introduced compulsory schooling for five year olds, and a right of admission for under-fives

1872 Education Act introduced compulsory schooling for children age five-thirteen

1905 Local authorities permitted to withdraw right of admission for under-fives and numbers enrolled drop

1914-

1918 Day nurseries expanded during the First World War, but contracted afterward

1918 Legislation allowed local authorities to establish nursery schools and day nurseries, but limited development

1939-

1945 Rapid expansion of day nurseries occurred during the Second World War

1945 Education Act placed a duty on local authorities to provide nursery education for children two-five years; after the war the government revises its stance on nursery education, which is to be provided only for children in exceptional circumstances

1950s Many public day nurseries closed and private childcare gradually increased

1960s Part-time nursery education increased; increased enrolment of under-fives in reception classes; beginning of voluntary playgroup movement

1967 Plowden report published proposing part-time nursery education for three and four year olds. Though it is not implemented, the number of children enrolled in reception classes increased

1976 Statutory maternity leave of 40 weeks introduced

1989 English Children Act reiterated that public funding for childcare is to be targeted at families in need and reforms regulation of providers

Late 1980s/early 1990s

Rapid growth in for-profit day nurseries coincided with increase in maternal employment

¹³⁵ Brind et al., 2012.

¹³⁶ Moss and Bennet, 2010, p. 9-11.

- 1994 Voucher scheme for part-time nursery places for three and four year olds introduced
- 1995 Children Act placed a duty on local authorities to provide services for children in need
- 1997 UK Labour Government is elected and ECEC became a policy priority
- 1998 Introduction of the Sure Start programme, targeting disadvantaged children; Entitlement to free part-time nursery education for four year olds introduced; Responsibility for childcare moved from the Department of Health to the Department for Education & Employment; National Childcare Strategy set out in a Green Paper; Childcare Tax Credit introduced
- 1999 Unpaid parental leave and time off for dependants introduced
- 2000 Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage for three to six year olds introduced; extension of Sure Start programme to reach greater number of children
- 2003 Responsibility for other children's services integrated under the Education Department; Green Paper Every Child Matters launched the development of Sure Start children's centres; paternity leave and the right to request flexible working introduced
- 2004 Expansion of children's centres; part-time free nursery education entitlement extended to three year olds; Ten Year Childcare Strategy published
- 2006 Childcare Act placed a number of new duties on local authorities including securing sufficient childcare for parents, and supporting local providers
- 2008 Early Years Foundation Stage (framework for all registered provision for under fives) introduced
- 2011 Additional paternity leave and pay introduced
- 2012 Revised Early Years Foundation Stage introduced

3.11 Conclusion

The current Coalition government is pursuing a series of reforms to ECEC policy and services. The aim of these reforms is to maximise their impact on outcomes (particularly for the most disadvantaged children and families) and their support for parents in or seeking work, at a time of debate on the high cost of childcare (for hours additional to the free entitlement) as well as the complexity of regulations and funding for providers.

Since 2011, the Government has required all local authorities to implement an early years single funding formula (EYSFF), to improve the fairness and transparency of funding to providers to support the free early education entitlement. It is currently

working to support local authorities to make their formulae simpler to understand, more transparent, and more focused on impact. The Department for Education has also recently published benchmarking information about local authority early years services to help improve the transparency of funding for free early education as well as other factors such as take up, quality of provision and children's outcomes.

Other reforms include: an extension of the Early Years Entitlement to the most disadvantaged two year olds from 2013-14; the introduction of a clearer and simpler Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) from September 2012 (following a review); and streamlined inspection arrangements.

Despite the reforms outlined above, the ECEC model in England is not yet an integrated one in terms of continuity of entitlement from birth to school. It is also expensive for both the state and private individuals, relative to other EU countries. In terms of governance, ECEC is integrated across educational and childcare provision, but not all early years services follow the educational framework. There is a division between the educational and childcare service aspects of ECEC. The part-time nature of the largely publicly provided educational provision presumes privately arranged childcare in addition, should more than one of the parents be employed. In sum, for the early years, parental care followed by informal care can be said to be the predominant forms of childcare in England, supplemented by private (for-profit and voluntary) and public formal childcare.

4 COUNTRY REPORT: SWEDEN

4.1 Key Findings

- Sweden has a fully integrated system of ECEC with a legal entitlement for all children age one to school-entry to an ECEC place (with a separate preschool class for six year olds). Leave and ECEC policies are coordinated, leaving no 'care gap' between the end of paid parental leave and the entitlement to an ECEC place.
- Employment rates for mothers and women without children are very similar: 76.3% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 74.1% of mothers of children under six years.
- 32.1% of GDP is spent on social protection in Sweden.¹³⁷ 3.4% is spent on family benefits alone. 1.1% of GDP is spent on ECEC.¹³⁸
- A 'Gender Equality Bonus' offers further economic incentive for fathers to take a greater share of parental leave. If parents share all available leave equally, the bonus is worth up to SEK 13,500 (£1,256).
- The main type of ECEC is the preschool (*förskola*), an 'age integrated' centre offering all-year and full-day provision for all children age one to six. Over 85% of all children in formal ECEC attend a preschool.
- ECEC provision is predominantly public in Sweden, over 80% of formal ECEC places are provided by municipalities.
- Swedish ECEC is predominantly publicly funded; in 2011 7% of the costs of a preschool place and 17% of the costs of an after school care place were financed through parent fees; the rest was paid by the municipalities.
- Parent fees for preschools and after school care depend on income and the number of children in ECEC in the household. In addition, the maximum amount any parents pay is capped at a 'maximum fee' (called *maxtaxa*), which is set annually and on a national level.
- For children age one to three average weekly attendance in formal ECEC is 33 hours.
- The average child:staff ratio in 2011 was 5.3 children per worker and the average group size was 16.8 children.
- 51.7% of workers in the ECEC sector have a university degree, a proportion that has remained relatively stable over the last decade.

¹³⁷ Data for 2009. Eurostat.

¹³⁸ Data for 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

4.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ Sweden has a fully integrated system of ECEC with a legal entitlement for all children age one to school-entry to an ECEC place (with a separate preschool class for six year olds). Leave and ECEC policies are coordinated, leaving no 'care gap' between the end of paid parental leave and the entitlement to an ECEC place.

In international comparisons Sweden is considered to have one of the most generous ECEC systems in the world providing high-quality early years services to all children at low cost to parents. This system has a long history.

The idea of a universal public system that combines childcare and early learning was formulated in the 1930s by the policy expert Alva Myrdal. But it was not until after WWII that formal ECEC provision began to increase. During the 1960s, labour shortage, women's increased entry into the labour market, and demands for more gender equality brought ECEC onto the political agenda. In the 1970s the Swedish government began to actively promote women's employment and a dual earner family model; and the number of places in day care centres (today called preschools) increased. Between 1975 and 1990 attendance rates of children age one to six increased from 17% to 52%,¹³⁹ but demand for places rose even faster.

Two main drivers were behind the historic development and expansion of ECEC in Sweden: the dual aim to support all children's early development and learning, and to facilitate parents' labour market participation. This was grounded in a shared value base in Sweden emphasising children's rights, gender equality and social inclusion on the one hand and economic considerations on the other.¹⁴⁰ The prosperity of the Swedish economy and the expansion and sustainability of the welfare state were – and still are today – understood to be premised on high employment levels among men and women alike.

In 1995 an entitlement to ECEC services was introduced for children (from age one) who have parents in employment or education, or who have special needs. The entitlement to attend ECEC was extended to all children in 2000.¹⁴¹

→ Today, almost all three to five year olds (94%), 88% of two year olds, and 48% of one year olds participate in formal ECEC.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Bergqvist, C., and Nyberg, A., Den svenska barnomsorgsmodellen - kontinuitet och förändring under 1990-talet [The Swedish child-care model: continuity and change during the 1990s]. In Statens Offentliga Utredningar, *Välfärdstjänster i omvandling* [Welfare services in transition], Stockholm: SOU 2001:52, p.243.

¹⁴⁰ Naumann, I., *Childcare politics in the Swedish and German welfare states from the 1950s to the 1970s*, PhD thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2006.

¹⁴¹ Swedish Ministry of Education, *Förskolan i politiken. Om intentioner och beslut bakom den svenska förskolans framväxt*, report by Barbara M. Korpi, Stockholm, 2006; Naumann, I., 'Towards the Marketisation of Early Childhood Education and care? Recent Developments in Sweden and the United Kingdom', *Journal of Nordic Social Research*, No. 2, 2011.

¹⁴² Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012. Available at: <http://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-analys>.

4.3 Socio-economic context

Sweden is a democratic constitutional monarchy and member of the EU since 1995. It has a population of a bit over nine million, and due to the country's large size, population density is well below the European average.

→ Living standards in Sweden are high in European comparison; Sweden has a GDP per capita of 126% of the EU-27 average.¹⁴³

Fertility rates in Sweden are above European average, but below replacement level (1.98).¹⁴⁴ Single parenthood is common in Sweden, 19% of children grow up in single parent households,¹⁴⁵ but teenage pregnancies are rare with 5.92 births per 1000 women age 15-19.¹⁴⁶ The mean age of mothers at first birth is 28.4.¹⁴⁷ Children under 15 years make up 16.6% of the Swedish population.¹⁴⁸

Box 4.1: Summary of key population statistics¹⁴⁹

Total fertility rate: 1.98
Mean age of mothers at first birth: 28.4
Teenage pregnancies (no. of births per 1000 women age 15-19): 5.92
Child population: 16.6%
Children in lone parent households: 19%

4.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 80% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 7.5% for those age 15-74. The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 82.8% and for women 77.2%.¹⁵⁰

9.8% of employed men work part-time and 18.4% of employed women work part-time.¹⁵¹

→ Employment rates for mothers and women without children are very similar: 76.3% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 74.1% of mothers of children under six years. The difference is

¹⁴³ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

¹⁴⁴ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: Sweden,' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.

¹⁴⁶ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

¹⁴⁷ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

¹⁴⁸ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Sweden,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

¹⁵⁰ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

¹⁵¹ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, 2011.

much greater for men: 78.2% of men without children were employed, compared to 93.4% of fathers with a child below the age of six.¹⁵²

About 40-44% of mothers of children age eleven and under work part-time, compared to about 4-8% of similar fathers.¹⁵³

Box 4.2: Summary of employment statistics¹⁵⁴

Total employment rate: 80%
Total unemployment rate: 7.5%
Women's employment rate: 77.2%
Men's employment rate: 82.8%
Women's part-time employment: 18.4%
Men's part-time employment: 9.8%
Mothers' employment rate: 74.1%
Fathers' employment rate: 93.4%

4.5 Welfare system and social support for families with small children

Sweden is number one in Europe for competitiveness and is often likened to the 'bumble bee that can fly': strong economic performance and competitiveness are combined in Sweden with high taxes (almost 43% of an average workers income), high welfare state spending (32.1% of GDP), and a large public sector. Total public expenditure accounted for 53.1% of GDP in 2010.¹⁵⁵

→ 32.1% of GDP is spent on social protection in Sweden.¹⁵⁶ 3.4% is spent on family benefits alone. 1.1% of GDP is spent on ECEC.¹⁵⁷

The Swedish welfare state, supported by robust corporate arrangements between employer organisations and trade unions, is characterised by the principles of equality and universalism and has relatively strong redistributive effects. It is strongly service oriented with public spending for education, family and children above the EU average. High levels of employment among both men and women support the welfare system.

¹⁵² Data from 2011. Eurostat. Data on parental employment is drawn from the European Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), which is a large household sample survey collected by national statistical agencies. This is the most up-to-date micro-level data available for parental employment patterns; EU-LFS data does not differentiate employment rates of parents with children younger than three, or between three and five.

¹⁵³ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

¹⁵⁴ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

¹⁵⁵ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Sweden,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

¹⁵⁶ Data for 2009. Eurostat

¹⁵⁷ Data for 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

The reconciliation of work and family is a key element of this high-tax/high-productivity balance as reflected in extensive high-quality ECEC provision and generous parental leave policy.

The general social security system in Sweden comprises the following branches:¹⁵⁸

- health insurance;
- benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases;
- invalidity benefits;
- old-age and survivors' pensions;
- unemployment insurance;
- family benefits and parental insurance.

The general social insurance regime is compulsory, except for the earnings-related part of unemployment insurance. The system is financed from taxation and earnings-related contributions. Employers' contributions amounting to 31.42% of the wage bill cover most of the cost.

In addition, insured persons' contributions have recently been introduced to finance part of the old-age pension scheme. Contributions cover three quarters of all insurance expenditure. The rest is financed by yield from funds and by taxes via the state budget.

Families in Sweden benefit from a wide variety of support:

- Child allowance: a universal benefit of SEK 1,050 (£98) per month for all children up to the age of 16 years; additional supplements are granted for low income families and for children between the ages of 16 and 20 who are in full-time education;
- Large family supplement: an additional benefit for families with at least two children; the amount paid increases with each subsequent child;
- Parent's cash benefit: may be paid when a child is born or adopted, to enable the parent to stay at home with the child;
- Temporary parent's cash benefit: can be paid for short periods of leave to look after a sick child;
- Housing allowance: a means-tested benefit for families with dependent children.

In addition, Swedish legislation gives the municipalities the right to introduce, finance and administer municipal child care allowances. This allowance can be granted for children over the age of one but younger than three. To be entitled, parents must have taken at least 250 days of parent's cash benefit. The allowance can be combined with paid employment but not with other social security benefits relating to unemployment, sickness, parenthood or old-age.

¹⁵⁸ The following material is extracted from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for Sweden available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Sweden_en.pdf

The maximum amount of child care allowance is SEK 3,000 (£280) per child and per month. The municipalities have been given the right to reduce the allowance if the child attends a publicly funded preschool establishment. The amount is reduced according to the amount of time the child spends in preschool.

Box 4.3: Summary of public expenditure¹⁵⁹
<p>Total public expenditure: 53.1% of GDP</p> <p>On social protection: 32.1% of GDP</p> <p>On family benefits: 3.4% of GDP</p> <p>On early education and care: 1.1%</p>

4.6 Leave policies for families with small children¹⁶⁰

4.6.1 Structure

Parental leave in Sweden is generous in terms of entitlement, payment and flexibility. Two parents are eligible for 480 days leave. 60 days are reserved for each parent; the remaining 360 days are designed to be split fifty-fifty, but can be transferred between parents.

Parents do not need to be living together to share leave. There is no gap between the end of the leave period and entitlement to ECEC.

Parental leave is the main system of leave, but there are further supplementary leaves available. Women must take two weeks leave either before or after birth, but this is the extent of maternity provision. There are also possibilities of paid leave during pregnancy.

Fathers have a statutory entitlement to two weeks paternity leave, though it is called 'temporary leave in connection with a child's birth or adoption,' so as to reflect that is a gender-neutral entitlement.

Other leaves include a municipal child-raising allowance, adoption leave, leave to care for sick and disabled children and the right to reduce working time by up to 25%.

4.6.2 Payment and funding

In simplified terms, leave is generally compensated at 80% of earnings up to an earnings ceiling of SEK 330,000 (£30,695) for maternity and temporary leave and SEK 440,000 (£40,927) for parental leave. In the case that parents were not previously employed, a lower flat-rate payment of SEK 180 (£17) a day is paid.

¹⁵⁹ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

¹⁶⁰ This section draws heavily from the work of Haas, L., Duvander, A-Z, Chronholm, A., 'Sweden.' In P. Moss (ed), *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2012*, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012.

→ A 'Gender Equality Bonus' offers further economic incentive for fathers to take a greater share of parental leave. If parents share all available leave equally, the bonus is worth up to SEK 13,500 (£1,256).

4.6.3 Role of employers

All employees are eligible for leave. Leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements, particularly in the public sector, but also in the private sector. The Swedish Social Insurance Agency, funded by employers' contributions, makes payments and the government meets any shortfall.

4.6.4 Uptake of parental leave

There is evidence that Swedish women delay having children until they are in gainful employment in order to qualify for the parental leave entitlements: the average age of first time mothers is relatively high (28.4), and most parents use their paid parental leave.

Although parents can decide how they split the paid parental leave between mother and father (with exception of 60 days each that are earmarked), the majority of parental leave is taken by mothers, with fathers taking 23% of all parental leave days used in 2010. Fathers' take up rates of parental leave have increased over the last decade from around 10% in the early 1990s.¹⁶¹

Almost all families use parental leave, mostly during the first two years of the child's life, though it can be used until the child's eighth birthday. Maternity leave is compulsory and so take up is close to 100%. In 2010, 20% of pregnant women took some pre-birth leave and 73% of fathers took paternity leave. In 2010, 44% of parental leave benefit recipients were men, 56% were women.

4.7 National framework of ECEC

Sweden has a fully integrated system of ECEC covering all children from twelve months to six years with no separate provision for children at risk, and with a unitary framework for access, funding, workforce training, regulation and curriculum. From the age of six most children spend a year in a preschool class (*förskoleklass*) before starting school. While not compulsory, the preschool class is offered as part of the public school system. The compulsory school age is seven.

4.7.1 Governance

In Sweden, ECEC is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (since 1996, prior to that it was under the Ministry of Social Affairs). Until the 1990s Swedish public governance was highly centralised with central government setting of detailed laws, regulations and budgets.

¹⁶¹ Duvander, A-Z. and Lammi-Taskula, J., 'Parental leave.' In I. Gislason and G. Eydal (eds.), *Parental leave, childcare and gender equality in the Nordic countries*, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011. Available at: <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2011-562>

Since the early 1990s public service delivery has become strongly decentralised: the ministry defines frameworks of goals and objectives, such as the national curriculum, with municipalities playing the central role in implementing policy, planning and delivering ECEC services. Kommuns also determine work conditions, such as pay, group size and adult:child ratios.

The National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) monitors and evaluates policy and practice nationwide, and collects and publishes statistical information on all education services; it also plays an important role in supporting the implementation of policy.

4.7.2 Types of services

→ The main type of ECEC is the preschool (*förskola*), an ‘age integrated’ centre offering all-year and full-day provision for all children age one to six. Over 85% of all children in formal ECEC are attending a preschool.¹⁶²

In addition, there is also family day care (*familjedaghem* – what is called a childminder in Scotland), also on an all-year round full-day provision, usually for a small number of children in the carer’s home. Since 2009 family day care has been renamed to ‘pedagogical care’ (*pedagogisk verksamhet*) to indicate and encourage a wider diversity of forms of pedagogical and care activities than the traditional family day care.¹⁶³ Further, there is the ‘open preschool’ (*öppna förskolan*) offering playgroup activities to children (mostly under three) accompanied by their parents/carers.

In 2003 all four to five year olds received the right to at least 525 hours free preschool a year; since 2010 this entitlement has been extended to three-year olds. The free preschool entitlement is fully integrated into the full-time preschool centres and most children attend full-time. The free entitlement thus means in most cases a fee reduction for parents.¹⁶⁴

Almost all six year olds (99%) attend the preschool class (*förskoleklass*), usually located in a school, before starting school at the age of seven, available for 525 hours/year and free of charge. Albeit not compulsory, the preschool class is considered part of the public school system.

The large majority (84%) of six year olds top up this free part-time service with after-school care (*fritidshem*), which is strongly state subsidised (see below). Most after-school care (free-time services as they are called in Sweden) is provided within the school. Over the last decade there has been an increasing integration of ‘free-time’ services within the school: ‘free-time pedagogues’ are often part of the teaching team in schools and organise and plan activities jointly with teachers during the school day.

¹⁶² Skolverket, *Barn och personal i förskolan hösten 2010*, Dnr 71-2011:14, 2011.

¹⁶³ Skolverket, *Pedagogisk omsorg*, 2012. Available at: www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-analys.

¹⁶⁴ Skolverket, *Barn och personal i förskolan hösten 2010*. Dnr 71-2011:14, 2011.

Box 4.4: Types of services

Preschool (*förskola*)

Pedagogical care (*pedagogisk verksamhet*), formerly family day care (*familjedaghem*), or childminders

Open preschool (*öppen förskola*)

After school care (*fritidshem*)

4.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

→ ECEC provision is predominantly public in Sweden; over 80% of formal ECEC places are provided by municipalities (in preschools and pedagogical care).¹⁶⁵

Until the early 1990s, publicly funded ECEC services were provided exclusively by the municipalities (*kommuner*). From 1991 independent providers have been permitted as part of the public ECEC system, and there has been a steady increase in independent preschools since.

In 2006, 16.9% of all preschool places were provided by independent preschools (i.e. privately owned). Today 19.5% of preschool places are provided in independent preschool settings, which includes:

- for-profit companies (8.8%);
- parent or staff co-operatives (6.6%);
- other non-public ownership (4.1%).¹⁶⁶

For 'pedagogical care' (mainly family day care) the proportion of independent providers is higher than for centre-based preschools, with 28.5% of places provided privately; for open preschools it is lower, with 12.9% of all such facilities being run privately.¹⁶⁷

4.7.4 Financing and costs

→ Swedish ECEC is predominantly publicly funded; in 2011 7% of the costs of a preschool place and 17% of the costs of an after school care place were financed through parent fees; the rest was paid by the municipalities.¹⁶⁸

The average annual running cost for each enrolled child in preschool in Sweden (all age groups one to six) was SEK 122,300 (£11,376).¹⁶⁹ The total cost for all preschool activities in municipal ownership was SEK 123,600 (£11,497) per place/child of which SEK 17,300 (£1,609) went towards financing facilities and SEK 89,900 (£8,362) towards staff costs. Municipalities spent on average SEK 108,300 (£10,074) per place/child to cover the running costs of independent providers. The

¹⁶⁵ This figure excludes open preschools as there is no data available for the number of children using these services.

¹⁶⁶ Data for 2011. Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁶⁷ Data for 2011. Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Data for 2011. Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁶⁹ Calculations are for a full-day all year round preschool place.

annual costs for a place in a *fritidshem* was SEK 34,800 (£3,237),¹⁷⁰ with SEK 5,500 (£512) going towards facilities and SEK 24,300 (£2,260) towards staff costs.¹⁷¹

Table 4.1: Annual costs per enrolled child in preschool and after school care

	Average running cost per child	Municipal cost of payments to independent providers	Municipal cost of public preschools	% financed via parent fees
Preschool	SEK 122,300 (£11,376)	SEK 108,300 (£10,074)	SEK 123,600 (£11,497)	7%
After school care	SEK 34,800 (£3,237)	SEK 34,400 (£3,237)	SEK 34,500 (£3,237)	17%

The local authorities are responsible for the financing of ECEC services in their area and for fulfilling the legal obligation of providing an ECEC place to every child who applies for it. Municipalities levy flat rate income tax to finance their activities and different tax rates exist across municipalities. On top of local tax revenue municipalities receive block grants from the central government (financed through the national progressive income tax) for service delivery without any earmarking for specific types of service provision.

Municipalities set the local fees structure for ECEC which applies to both public and independent preschool settings. Independent providers are not allowed to raise extra fees.

All formal ECEC provision, whether public or independently run, receive the same amount of funding from the municipalities to cover running costs, mainly through a system of per-child allocation to providers (public and private providers alike). In preschool settings three to five year olds receive 525 hours/year free of charge, and the preschool class for six year olds is also free of charge.

→ Parent fees for preschools and after school care depend on income and the number of children in ECEC in the household. In addition, the maximum amount any parents pay is capped at a 'maximum fee' (called *maxtaxa*), which is set annually and on a national level.

Parents of children age one to five pay a maximum of 3% of their household income, up to SEK 1,260 (£117) a month for the first child attending; 2% for the second, up to SEK 840 (£78) and 1% for the third child, up to SEK 420 (£39). For children age six to thirteen the maximum fee in after school care is SEK 840 (£78) for the first child, SEK 420 (£39) for the second and SEK 420 (£39) for the third child (no fees for any subsequent child). In 2012, the monthly base income on which the maximum fee is constructed is SEK 42,000 (£3,907).¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *Fritidshem* places are part-time during school term (i.e. provided around the school day), but are offered on a full-day basis during school holidays.

¹⁷¹ The differences in costs to the municipalities towards places in public preschools (SEK 123,600) and independent preschool centres (SEK 108,300) is explained by the fact that costs for private providers only include running costs.

¹⁷² Skolverket, *Avgiftsnivåer för maxtaxa*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.skolverket.se/fortbildning-och-bidrag/statsbidrag/maxtaxa/avgiftsnivaer-for-maxtaxa-1.9183>

Within the limits of the ‘maximum fee’ (*maxtaxa*) regulations and municipal fees structures, parent contributions towards the funding of preschool places can differ, with a maximum spread of parent fees covering a minimum of 2% and a maximum of 20% of running costs.¹⁷³

Table 4.2: Maximum fees for a (full-time) ECEC place in 2012 (per month)

Preschool/pedagogical care		
	Maximum % of household income	But no more than...
Child 1	3%	SEK 1,260 (£117)
Child 2	2%	SEK 840 (£78)
Child 3	1%	SEK 420 (£39)
After school care (<i>fritidshem</i>)		
	Maximum % of household income	But no more than...
Child 1	2%	SEK 840 (£78)
Child 2	1%	SEK 420 (£39)
Child 3	1%	SEK 420 (£39)

4.8 Access levels and patterns of use

Enrolment in centre-based preschools is high in Sweden; 83% of all children age one to five attended preschool in 2011. 88% of children attend preschool by the time they are two, for three year olds it is 93% and for four to five year olds it is 94%. For one year olds attendance is considerably lower: 48% of children of this age group are in preschool. Almost all six year olds attend the so-called ‘preschool class’, which is part of the public school system, but not compulsory. 1% of six year olds attended preschool settings instead of this preschool class in 2011.¹⁷⁴

There is no public facility for children below the age of one to attend formal ECEC services as it is assumed that this age group is covered by paid parental leave arrangements.

Table 4.3: Preschool enrolment rate by age, 2011

1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	total
48%	88%	93%	94%	94%	1%	83%

The overwhelming majority of preschool children are enrolled in full-time preschool, but their days in the preschool centres are commonly relatively short. Preschools are usually open from about 7.00 or 8.00 and close at 17.00 or 18.00, but most parents will drop off their children between 8.00-9.00 and pick them up between 15.00-16.00.

→ For children age one to three average weekly attendance in formal ECEC is 33 hours.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁷⁴ Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁷⁵ Data from 2007/2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

Attendance in family day care is relatively uncommon in Sweden. In 2011, 3.1% of all children age one to five used this form of ECEC. There has been a steady decrease in the number of children using family day care over the last two decades from 172,000 in 1988 to 19,397 in 2011. Similarly, the participation in 'open preschools' (*öppna förskolan*) has been in decline: in 1990 there were 1,600 open preschools in all of Sweden, in 2011, there were 439. This decrease is has to be seen in relation to the increase in available preschool places over the same period.¹⁷⁶

Participation in after school care (*fritidshem*) is also very common in Sweden: 82.6% of the six to nine year olds attended after school services in 2011. For ten to twelve year olds the figure was 16.9%.¹⁷⁷

Table 4.4: Enrolment rate in after school care by age, 2011

6 years	7 years	8 years	9 years	10 years	11 years	12 years
84.6%	86.2%	84.1%	75.0%	32.1%	13.1%	5.0%
Total 6 – 9 year olds				Total 10 - 12 year olds		
82.6%				16.9%		

Historically children's participation in ECEC was lower in rural and remote areas than in urban areas, and was also differentiated according to children's socio-economic and ethnic background. Recent reforms such as the entitlement to a place and the *maxtaxa* have helped close regional and socio-economic gaps.¹⁷⁸

→ As the high levels of full-time preschool and after school care enrolment suggest, informal care is very uncommon in Sweden.

4.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

4.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

Inspection

The municipalities are responsible for the implementation of policy and delivery of services. Public preschools are obliged to produce annual quality reports for evaluation by the *kommuns*. *Kommuns* often also require pedagogical documentation.

In 2008 a new Swedish Schools Inspectorate (*Skolinspektionen*) was established to ensure that municipalities and schools fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with the Education Act and in relation to the objectives and principles laid out in the national curriculum. Standards are not set nationally, but determined by the *kommuns*.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Skolverket, *Öppen förskola år 2011, 2012; Annan pedagogisk verksamhet*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-analys>; Moss and Bennett, 2010, p. 12.

¹⁷⁷ Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Skolverket, *Tio år efter förskolereformen*, Stockholm, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ See Moss and Bennett, 2010.

There is no national regulation of child:staff ratios or group sizes, and there are variations between municipalities. Average group sizes and child:staff ratios increased during the economic crisis in Sweden in the 1990s, but have stayed relatively stable since 2000.¹⁸⁰

→ The average child:staff ratio in 2011 was 5.3 children per worker; during the 1980s there were on average four children per preschool staff. The average group size was 16.8 children in 2011 (versus 13.8 in 1985).¹⁸¹

National Curriculum

ECEC in Sweden is today seen as the first stage in lifelong learning, and to emphasise the educational dimension of ECEC it was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education in 1996. In 1998 Sweden introduced its first preschool curriculum. ECEC in Sweden is grounded in a pedagogical tradition that promotes a:

*'holistic view of children and their needs and is designed so that care, development and learning come together to form a whole. Preschool is intended to promote a broad spectrum of contacts and social community, and to prepare children for continued education.'*¹⁸²

The revised preschool curriculum of 2010 emphasises the importance of play for children's development and learning. There is a focus on imaginative, creative activities, the exploration of the surrounding world and nature and cooperation in Swedish ECEC. Learning is also seen to be intrinsically linked to care. Care provides a sense of social well-being that forms the basis for development and learning. The curriculum emphasises certain core values the preschool shall transmit in its organisation and practice: respect for human rights, fundamental democratic values, social justice, gender equality and respect for the environment.¹⁸³

4.9.2 Workforce qualifications

There are two types of workers in preschool settings (preschool and preschool class). Preschool teachers (*förskolelärare*) hold a three year University graduate degree; nursery nurses (*barnskötare*) are qualified at the upper secondary level. Since the beginning of the 2000s preschool teachers receive their education in a joint teacher training programme where they share part of their education with school teachers and 'free-time pedagogues' (*fritidspädagoger*). 'Free-time pedagogues' who work in after-school settings (in Sweden these are called 'free time' services) also hold University degrees.

¹⁸⁰ Skolverket, *Tio år efter förskolereformen*, Stockholm, 2008.

¹⁸¹ Skolverket, *Efterfrågade mått*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-analys/statistik/2.4317/efterfragade-matt-1.127392>

¹⁸² Regeringskansliet, *Preschool*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/7172>; See also the Preschool Curriculum (*Läroplan för förskolan, Lpfö*), 1998.

¹⁸³ See the Preschool Curriculum (*Läroplan för förskolan, Lpfö*), 1998, and the amended Preschool Curriculum 2010.

There are no formal educational requirements for family day carers (*dagbarnvårdare*), but most municipalities offer special introductory training of 50-100 hours for family day carers. However, three out of four practicing family day carers hold a child-related education.¹⁸⁴

→ 51.7% of workers in the ECEC sector have a university degree, a proportion that has remained relatively stable over the last decade.

In independent preschools qualification levels have in general been lower and the proportion of preschool teachers has decreased from 48.8% in 2000 to 36.7% in 2011.¹⁸⁵

In 2011, 98,500 workers were employed in the ECEC sector. Most staff in preschool settings are women, with men making up 3% of the workforce; this proportion has been more or less unchanged since the 1990s.¹⁸⁶

Preschool teachers in Sweden earn on average SEK 24,000/month (£2,232). For comparison: primary school teachers earn on average a monthly income of SEK 26,000 (£2,418) and upper secondary teachers SEK 28,000 (£2,604). *Barnskötare* and *dagbarnvårdare* earn around SEK 20,100 (£1,870).¹⁸⁷

Box 4.5: Median monthly salary in municipal childcare in 2004 in Euros¹⁸⁸

Childminder: 1,793 (£1,439)

Leisure time teacher: 2,043 (£1,640)

Preschool teacher: 2,085 (£1,674)

Primary school teacher: 2,398 (£1,925)

4.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy

1900 First maternal protection legislation

1943 First state operating grant for ECEC

1955 Maternity leave

1968-

1972 National Commission on childcare (*barnstugeutredningen*): develops framework for universal integrated early childhood education and care in Sweden

1974 Introduction of paid parental leave. Sweden is one of first countries to do so.

¹⁸⁴ See Moss and Bennett, 2010, p 17.

¹⁸⁵ Sveriges officiella statistik, Skolverket, 2012.

¹⁸⁶ Sveriges officiella statistik, Skolverket, 2011.

¹⁸⁷ See: <http://allastudier.se/jobb-o-l%C3%B6n/?q=l%C3%A4rare+f%C3%B6rskola>.

¹⁸⁸ 'Employment developments in childcare services for school-age children: Sweden' European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2006.

- 1975 Preschool Act (*förskolelagen*), entitles all six year olds to 525 hours pre-school education, state funded and provided by kommuns
- 1977 Paternity leave
- 1991 Local Government Act, decentralization; gives kommuns greater responsibility and freedom for ECEC provision (and other social services) including planning and delivery, funding, teacher training, staff pay rates; block grants from central government replace earmarked funding of ELC services
- 1995 New Childcare Act comes into force: kommuns are obliged to provide an ECEC place for all children from age one whose parents are in employment or education, within three months of application
- 1995 Introduction of father's quota, this means that part of the leave is exclusively reserved for the father, so the couple lose this entitlement if it is not used
- 1996 Responsibility for ECEC transferred from Ministry of Social Affairs to Ministry of Education
- 1998 A preschool curriculum is introduced (*Läroplan för förskolan, Lpfö*)
- 1998 Introduction of (voluntary) preschool class for six year olds (six year olds since then taken out of ECEC statistics and listed separately)
- 2000 Universal entitlement of ECEC for all children introduced: now also children of parents who are not in employment or on parental leave are entitled to attend ECEC on a part-time basis (15 hours/week)
- 2002 A maximum fee (*maxtaxa*) with a maximum cap on parental fees introduced
- 2003 Free universal preschool provision for four and five year olds introduced (525 hours/annum)
- 2008 Gender Equality Bonus – economic compensation if parental leave days are shared more equally by both parents
- 2010 Free universal preschool provision extended to three year olds
- 2010 Introduction of childcare allowance for parents who wish to care for their own child at home (voluntary for kommuns to introduce in their area)

4.11 Conclusion

Sweden has a universal and integrated approach to early childhood education and care where all children of preschool age have a social right to high-quality full-time and predominantly publicly funded provision. Parental leave and ECEC entitlement are closely coordinated with children having an entitlement to a place from twelve months old.

While coverage rates in ECEC are high in Sweden in international perspective, there is ongoing debate in Sweden over the lack of fit between opening hours of preschool centres and the working times of parents who work shift, or irregular hours (as is common in health and care professions, but also in industries). The 2010 Education Act stipulates that *kommuns* are responsible for providing ECEC services at 'uncomfortable working hours' (*förskola på obekväm arbetstid*) to support parents in reconciling work and family life. These services are, however, not subsidised by central government. Today six out of ten municipalities offer this service.¹⁸⁹

The Swedish labour force is strongly gender-segregated, with two thirds of all employed women working in the public sector and two thirds of employed men in the private sector. The overwhelming majority of workers in the early years sector are women. Various campaigns over the last decades have attempted to attract more men into the ECEC professions, led by concerns that children need both female and male role models in their development, but the proportion of male workers in the sector has remained 3% since the 1980s.

There is much interest in increasing the amount of parental leave taken by fathers, particularly those on low and medium incomes, and measures put in place to address this include the Gender Equality Bonus and the higher payment ceiling for parental leave. Much of the information above on parental leave policy comes from the very recent publication by country experts Haas, Duvander and Chronholm, (2012).¹⁹⁰ These experts have been contacted by the research team (July 2012) and confirmed that recent political debates rest around whether to extend the quota of days reserved for fathers. The other issue currently being discussed is how to construct the baseline replacement payment rate in relation to previous income.

¹⁸⁹ Sveriges officiella statistik, Skolverket.

¹⁹⁰ Haas, L., Duvander, A-Z, Chronholm, A., 'Sweden.' In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2012*, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, 2012.

5 COUNTRY REPORT: DENMARK¹⁹¹

5.1 Key findings

- Denmark has a fully integrated ECEC system with a universal entitlement to a full-time place for children from 26 weeks to compulsory school age. The child's ECEC entitlement starts before the end of the maximum paid parental leave period, giving parents leeway in deciding when to return to work.
- 74.6% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 77.6% of men. 79.7% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed, compared to 90.9% of fathers.
- As of 2009, public expenditure on social protection made up 33.4% of GDP. 3.28% was specifically directed toward families and children. Expenditure on ECEC made up 1.3% of GDP in 2007.
- Survey data for 2005 showed that 24% of fathers and 94% of mothers took parental leave. Recent statistics from 2012 show an increasing tendency for only the mother to take leave.
- The majority of day care centres are age-integrated, including both a nursery and a kindergarten, facilitating continuity of care.
- 74% of ECEC services for preschool age children are offered by the municipality. The rest is made up of independent institutions that are predominantly run on a non-profit basis by associations or parents in agreement with the municipality and that receive public funding.
- In the 2009 budget gross costs per child in a day facility were €11,000 (£8,830), and net costs were €5,600 (£4,495). In leisure time facilities for school-age children, gross costs were €3,850 (£3,090) and net costs were 2,800 (£2,248).
- Informal care outside the family is forbidden by law.
- Most children attend full-time day care centres: 67% of all one to three year olds and 97% of three to five year olds are enrolled in such facilities.
- Public childminders are contracted by the municipality to provide the service. They are selected and trained, paid and supervised by the municipality.
- Pedagogues or educators holding a university degree are the lead personnel in all day care facilities. They account for 60% of staff – the highest rate of professionals of all the Nordic countries.

¹⁹¹ We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support from Kirsti Rudbeck Roege and colleagues, Danish Ministry for Children and Education, for this chapter.

5.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ Denmark has a fully integrated ECEC system with a universal entitlement to a full-time place for children from 26 weeks to compulsory school age. The child's ECEC entitlement starts before the end of the maximum paid parental leave period, giving parents leeway in deciding when to return to work.

In Denmark, services for preschool children have traditionally been considered an essential aspect of the social welfare system, and as such have a long history. Similar to Sweden, the dual aim behind the Danish ECEC system is to provide a quality caring and learning environment for children while their parents work.¹⁹²

Three characteristics stand out for the Danish ECEC model: a high public commitment to provision and funding, universalism as central organising principle, the integration of 'education' and 'childcare' based on social pedagogical ideas grounded in a Fröbelian tradition¹⁹³. The foundations for this model were laid with a series of childcare acts in the 1960s, with a considerable expansion of places over the following decades.¹⁹⁴ Today, the attendance of Danish children in preschool and after school care is amongst the highest in Europe.

5.3 Socio-economic context

Denmark is a democratic constitutional monarchy and EU member since 1973. The population totals 5.58 million¹⁹⁵ with about 129 people per square kilometre.¹⁹⁶ The total fertility rate is 1.76.¹⁹⁷ 4.6 births occur for every 1000 women age 15-19¹⁹⁸ and the mean age of mothers at first birth is 29.1.¹⁹⁹ 18.1% of the population is under 15 years of age²⁰⁰ and 17% of children live in sole parent households.²⁰¹

¹⁹² OECD, 'Denmark,' *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD, Paris, 2001.

¹⁹³ Wollons, R. L., (ed). *Kindergartens and cultures: the global diffusion of an idea*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2000

¹⁹⁴ Borchorst, Anette, 'Danish Child-Care Policies within Path – Timing, Sequence, Actors and Opportunity Structures.' In K. Scheiwe and H. Willekens (eds.) *Child Care and Preschool Development in Europe. Institutional Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 126-141.

¹⁹⁵ Data from 2012. Danish national statistics. Available at <http://www.statistikbanken.dk>

¹⁹⁶ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

¹⁹⁷ Data from 2011. Danish national statistics.

¹⁹⁸ Data from 2011. Danish national statistics.

¹⁹⁹ Data from 2011. Danish national statistics.

²⁰⁰ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Denmark,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²⁰¹ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: United Kingdom.' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010, p.23.

Box 5.1: Summary of key population statistics²⁰²

Total fertility rate: 1.76

Mean age of mothers at first birth: 29.1

Teenage pregnancies (no. of births per 1000 women age 15-19): 4.6

Child population: 18.1%

Children in lone parent households: 17%

5.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 75.7% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 7.6% for those age 15-74. The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 79% and for women 72.4%.²⁰³ 13.8% of employed men work part-time and 25.2% of employed women.²⁰⁴ It is most common for both men and women to work between 35-39 hours per week (67% of men and 50% of women).²⁰⁵

→ 74.6% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 77.6% of men. 79.7% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed, compared to 90.9% of fathers.²⁰⁶

Box 5.2: Summary of employment statistics²⁰⁷

Total employment rate: 75.7%

Total unemployment rate: 7.6%

Women's employment rate: 72.4%

Men's employment rate: 79%

Mothers employment rate: 79.7%

Fathers employment rate: 90.9%

Employed men working part-time: 13.8%

Employed women working part-time: 25.2%

Denmark has a GDP per capita at 125% of the EU-27 average²⁰⁸ - an estimated €41,147 (£33,183) per person in 2008.²⁰⁹ Foreign trade is central to the Danish

²⁰² These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

²⁰³ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

²⁰⁴ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

²⁰⁵ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁰⁶ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

²⁰⁷ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

²⁰⁸ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

²⁰⁹ European Commission, 'Denmark,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

economy, two thirds of which is conducted with other EU countries, particularly Germany and Sweden.²¹⁰

5.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children²¹¹

The Danish welfare system is extensive and constitutes a large proportion of the economy. Overall government expenditure takes up 58.2% of GDP in Denmark.²¹²

→ As of 2009, public expenditure on social protection made up 33.4% of GDP.²¹³ 3.28% was specifically directed toward families and children. Expenditure on ECEC made up 1.3% of GDP in 2007.²¹⁴

→ Denmark has the highest public expenditure on education in Europe (8.7% of GDP); 0.47% of GDP is devoted to pre-primary education;²¹⁵ 0.8% is devoted to childcare services.²¹⁶

The ratio of income inequality between the top 20% and bottom 20% is 4.4,²¹⁷ while the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is 10.9%.²¹⁸ Income tax on the average worker made up 38.3% of labour cost in 2010.²¹⁹

Box 5.3: Summary of public expenditure²²⁰

<p>Total public expenditure: 58.2% of GDP</p> <p>On social protection: 33.4% of GDP</p> <p>On families and children: 3.28%</p> <p>On preschool education: 0.47% of GDP</p>
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Social security benefits in Denmark include:

- sickness, hospitalisation, maternity benefits, daily sickness and maternity allowances and re-adaptation aid
- benefits for accidents at work and occupational diseases

²¹⁰ European Commission, 'Denmark,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

²¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, this material is extracted from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for Denmark available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Denmark_en.pdf

²¹² Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Denmark,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²¹³ Data from 2009. Eurostat.

²¹⁴ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²¹⁵ Data from 2008. OECD, *OECD Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

²¹⁶ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²¹⁷ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

²¹⁸ Share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income) after social transfers. EU-SILC 2010.

²¹⁹ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Denmark,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²²⁰ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

- allowance towards funeral expenses
- invalidity pensions
- old age pensions and supplementary pensions
- unemployment benefits
- family benefits

Except for unemployment insurance, most branches of Danish social security are compulsory, so there are no conditions for inclusion within the various schemes.

Danish social security systems are generally financed by taxation (taxes paid to the central state, counties and local authorities). However, a general social security contribution, the Labour Market Fund, finances spending on sickness, maternity and unemployment benefits, as well as invalidity pensions and re-adaptation aid. 8% of employees' gross pay, or 8% of self-employed persons' income from self-employment is contributed to the Labour Market Fund.

Family benefits and family allowances are administered by the local authorities (within the scope of the Ministry of Taxation, *Skatteministeriet*, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, *Socialministeriet*). Cash maternity benefits are paid by local authorities (within the scope of the Ministry of Employment, *Beskæftigelsesministeriet*).

Child benefits and allowances include:

- Child benefit (*børnefamilieydelse*): paid for all children under 18;
- Ordinary child allowance (*ordinært børnetilskud*): granted to children under 18 of single parents and children whose parents are both in receipt of a standard retirement pension or an invalidity pension;
- Supplementary child allowance (*ekstra børnetilskud*): granted to single parents whose children receive the ordinary child allowance. Only one supplementary child allowance is paid to the parent, regardless of the number of children;
- Special child allowance (*særligt børnetilskud*): granted where a child under 18 no longer has both parents, or where one or both parents receive a standard or early retirement pension. It may be combined with the ordinary and supplementary child allowances.

The amount of child benefit varies according to the age of the child:

- Zero to two years: DKK 1,416 (£152) per month
- Three to six years: DKK 1,121 (£121) per month
- Seven to 17 years: DKK 882 (£95) per month

The maximum benefit per year is DKK 35,000 (£3,768).

Ordinary child allowance (*ordinært børnetilskud*) equals DKK 406 (£44) per month. The supplementary child allowance is DKK 413 (£44) per month and per household (irrespective of the number of children).

Municipalities can also introduce childcare allowances for parents taking care of their children instead of putting them in a nursery school. The benefit is available for parents who have been resident in Denmark during seven of the eight last years and

who have children age between 24 weeks and six years (the municipalities can stipulate more detailed age limits).

Child care allowance cannot exceed 85% of the costs for placing a child in a nursery of the municipality. There are maximum three allowances per household.

5.6 Leave policies for families with small children²²¹

5.6.1 Structure

In Denmark, there is Childbirth Leave, which can be further subdivided into four separate leave schemes:

- leave to be taken by the mother before birth (four weeks);
- leave reserved for the mother after birth (14 weeks);
- leave reserved for the father after birth (two weeks, to be taken during the first 14 weeks after birth);
- leave available for both parents after birth (32 weeks before the child is 48 weeks old).

Mothers must take two weeks after birth. Each parent is entitled to 32 weeks, but the total leave period cannot exceed more than 32 weeks per family. Anyone in a recognised partnership, including same-sex partnerships is eligible for paternity and parental leave.

There is an overlap between the end of the leave period and the entitlement to an ECEC place (when child is 26 weeks old), giving parents the choice when to return to work.

5.6.2 Payment and funding

All four types of leave are paid at full earnings up to a ceiling of €106 (£85) per working day before taxes for full-time employees and the self-employed. This is delivered as a daily cash benefit under the sickness benefit scheme, which is a basic system available for all employees (and self-employed), or they may receive coverage from their employer if covered by a labour market agreement, which gives this entitlement. The sickness benefit scheme is funded by the state from general taxation, except for the first eight weeks when municipalities bear half of the cost.

Where employers pay beyond this amount, they will be members of a leave fund which enables the cost of compensation to be pooled. All public sector employees, through collective agreements, receive full earnings in 24 of the 52-week leave period. Some private sector employers also pay full earnings for part or all of this period.

²²¹ The majority of the information in this section comes from Rostgaard, T., 'Denmark.' In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies*, 2012; Duvander, A-Z. and Lammi-Taskula, J. 'Parental leave.' Chapter 1 in I. Gislason and G. Eydal (eds.), *Parental Leave, childcare and gender equality in the Nordic countries*, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011. Available at: <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2011-562>

5.6.3 Role of employers

Eligibility for an employee for all types of childcare leave is based on a period of work of at least 120 hours in 13 weeks preceding the paid leave. Workers with temporary contracts are excluded only if they are not eligible for unemployment benefit. It is possible for parents to return to work on a part-time basis subject to agreement with the employer.

5.6.4 Uptake of parental leave

Nearly all mothers take maternity leave. On average, they used all the 14 weeks to which they were entitled after birth. Most fathers (89%) surveyed in 2006 made use of the two weeks of paternity leave.

→ Survey data for 2005 showed that 24% of fathers and 94% of mothers took parental leave. Recent statistics from 2012 show an increasing tendency for only the mother to take leave.²²²

5.7 National framework of ECEC

ECEC in Denmark is organised and delivered as an integrated system and is an entitlement for all children below school age.

→ All children have a universal entitlement to an ECEC place in a day-care facility from 26 weeks to compulsory school age and it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure these places are available.²²³

5.7.1 Governance

Day care services for preschool age children and after-school centres for school-age children are regulated by the Day-Care Facilities Act. They used to fall under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, but after the 2011 parliamentary elections they were transferred to the Ministry of Children and Education.²²⁴ After-school facilities attached to schools, known as school free time facilities, are governed by the General Education Act and the Continuation School Act and also fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Education.²²⁵

Administration and management of ECEC services is the responsibility of each local authority. Local authorities are obligated to ensure sufficient day care places for children between 26 weeks and compulsory school age, as well as after-school care for school-age children. They are involved in direct provision of services, approval

²²² Olsen, B.M., Evaluering af den fleksible barselsorlov. Orlovsreglerne set fra forældres, kommuners og arbejdspladers perspektiv [Evaluation of the flexible leave. Leave rights from the perspective of parents, municipalities and employers]. SFI 07: 29, 2007. Available at: http://www.sfi.dk/graphics/SFI/Pdf/Rapporter/2007/0729_Fleksibel%20Barselorlov.pdf

²²³ Danish Ministry for Children and Education, *Optagelse i dagtilbud og pasningsgaranti*, 2012. Available at: <http://www.uvm.dk/Uddannelser-og-dagtilbud/Dagtilbudsomraadet/Fakta-om-dagtilbud/Optagelse-i-dagtilbud-og-pasningsgaranti>

²²⁴ Personal Communication from Danish Ministry of Children and Education, October 2012.

²²⁵ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012. Available at: <http://english.sm.dk/social-issues/children-and-youth/daycarefacilities/Sider/Start.aspx>

and supervision of private centres, referring children to private childminders²²⁶ and delivering subsidies to providers.²²⁷

5.7.2 Types of services

→ All ECEC services are delivered on a full-day basis.

Some ECEC services are distinguished by age group, while some are age-integrated. Children below compulsory school age may be accepted into nursery or childminder care from 26 weeks to six years of age. However, at age three most children will make the transition to kindergarten.

Alternatively, a child may attend an age-integrated institution from 26 weeks to the beginning of school (and in some cases may continue to receive after-school care from the same institution).

→ The majority of day care centres are age-integrated, including both a nursery and a kindergarten, facilitating continuity of care.²²⁸

Children of school age either attend after school care attached to schools (school free time facilities, or SFOs) or after school centres.²²⁹

Most day care facilities are open Monday-Friday year round, opening at about 6:30-7:00 and closing around 16:00. There also exist institutions that are open all day and night to accommodate shift workers; these are, however, rare.²³⁰

Box 5.4: Types of services²³¹

Day-care centres (*dagtilbud*) – umbrella term for all formal ECEC provision for preschool children, including nurseries, kindergartens, age-integrated institutions and childminding.

Childminding (*dagpleje*) – family day care catering for children from 26 weeks to 6 years (in practice mainly for children up to 3 years)

Nurseries (*vuggestuer*) – for children from 26 weeks to 3 years

Kindergarten (*børnehaver*) – for children from 3-6 years

Age-integrated day-care centres (*aldersintegrerede institutioner*) – for children from 26 weeks to 6 years (sometimes up to 12 years)

After-school centres (*fritidshjem*) – for children from 6-10, sometimes older

School free time facilities, known as SFOs (*skolefritidsordninger*) – school-based after-school care

²²⁶ Private childminders enter into an agreement with the local authority on whether the municipality refers children to the childminder, the childminder does it itself, or whether it takes place in a collaboration. Personal communication from Danish Ministry of Children and Education, October 2012.

²²⁷ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²²⁸ Danish Ministry for Children and Education, *Fakta om dagtilbud*, 2012.

²²⁹ Danish Ministry for Children and Education, *Fakta om dagtilbud*, 2012.

²³⁰ European Commission, 'Denmark,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

²³¹ Danish Ministry for Children and Education, *Fakta om dagtilbud*, 2012. Available at: <http://uvm.dk/Uddannelser-og-dagtilbud/Dagtilbudsomraadet>

5.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

The majority of Danish ECEC is publicly provided, including childminding.

→ 74% of ECEC services for preschool age children are offered by the municipality. The rest is made up of independent institutions that are predominantly run on a non-profit basis by associations or parents in agreement with the municipality and that receive public funding.

Most independent associations are run by parents. In 2011 a new law on the 'licensing out' of municipal ECEC services was passed. According to this law local authorities can contract out the running of ECEC services to private companies, who have the possibility, within limits, to draw profit from the service.²³² The number of for-profit providers is, however, low. In 2011, there were 388 institutions (all types: nurseries, kindergartens, age-integrated institutions, playgroups) that ran on a for-profit basis (5.7% of all daycare services), compared to 5,037 municipal and 1,410 independent, non-profit providers.²³³

The majority of after-school care is attached to schools; in 2011 of the 1,913 existing after school services, 1,790 were in schools (approx 94%), while there were 123 recreation centres that were not attached to schools. Only four out of all after school services were run on a for-profit basis; 443 institutions were independent (non-profit) and 1,466 were in municipal ownership.²³⁴

Table 5.1: Public/private mix of ownership, 2011

	Number of municipal institutions	Number of independent (non-profit) institutions	Number of private (for-profit) institutions
Nurseries	183	81	20
Kindergartens	1,052	392	134
Age-integrated day-care centres	1,969	432	113
After school care	1,383	407	-

Source: Danish Ministry for Children and Education, personal communication, October 2012

5.7.4 Financing and costs

The municipalities are responsible for financing ECEC services in their areas. Central state block grants to local authorities and local taxes are used to subsidise all types of ECEC settings on a per-child basis.

Most costs are covered publicly. On average net childcare costs take up 9% of family income.²³⁵ Expenditure is large due to high demand, low child:staff ratios and high

²³² Danish Ministry for Children and Education, Fakta om dagtilbud, 2012.

²³³ Danish national statistics, 2012.

²³⁴ Danish national statistics, 2012.

²³⁵ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008. OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

salaries for staff. In 2011, Denmark spent 31.2 billion DKK (£3.36bn) on ECEC provision.²³⁶

→ In the 2009 budget, gross costs per child in a day facility were €11,000 (£8,830), and net costs were €5,600 (£4,495). In leisure time facilities for school-age children, gross costs were €3,850 (£3,090) and net costs were €2,800 (£2,248).²³⁷

The local authority is tasked with ensuring an ECEC place in a day-care facility for all children and for providing a subsidy for that place directly to the provider. Parents' choices must be respected where possible and subsidies follow the child, whether to a nursery or a childminder, a public or independent place. The local authority is obliged to offer a day-care place within four weeks after the child has reached the age of 26 weeks. If the guaranteed day-care availability is breached, the local authority must offer to cover either the parents' expenses for a private care scheme or the expenses for a place in another local authority. Local authorities are similarly responsible for ensuring children have a place in after-school care.²³⁸

For children under school-age attending day care services, the local authority is required to cover at least 75% of gross operating costs – parent payments are not allowed to exceed 25% of the costs. For after-school care, parent payments are not allowed to exceed 30%. Since 2010, meals are also required to be provided with day care services. Parents at a day care facility may opt out of the municipal lunch arrangements and collectively make other arrangements or agree to provide lunch individually for their children.²³⁹

If parents prefer approved private care, the same subsidy follows the child, but private providers are not bound by price ceilings and may set their own rates.²⁴⁰

Parent fees are set annually by the municipalities,²⁴¹ fees differ for different types of settings. In 2012 the average annual parent fee for municipal day-care for children from birth to age two was DKK 27,557 (£2,967); for nurseries (birth to three years) DKK 32,872 (£3,539); for municipal day-care for children three to five years) DKK 25,912 (£2,790); for kindergartens (three to five years) DKK 18,162 (£1,955); for age-integrated day-care centres for the age group birth to two years DKK 33,070 (£3,560) and for age-integrated day care centres for the age group three to five years DKK 18,979 (£2,043). The actual payment of the parents is often lower than the rates as parents with more children or low income receive reductions.²⁴²

²³⁶ Faktaark: Dagtilbud, 21.03.2011. Available at: <http://www.kl.dk/Born-og-unge/Fakta-om-dagtilbud>.

²³⁷ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: Denmark.' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.

²³⁸ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²³⁹ Danish Ministry for Children and Education, *Tilskud til dagtilbudsplads og foraeldrebetaling*, 2012; Communication from the Ministry for Children and Education, October 2012.

²⁴⁰ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²⁴¹ Fees may, however, be adjusted continuously over the year if budgets should change. Personal communication from the Ministry for Children and Education, October 2012.

²⁴² Danish national statistics, 2012.

Table 5.2: Average parent fees (without additional subsidies) for 2012

Municipal day-care for children (0-2)	Nurseries (0-3)	Municipal day-care for children (3-5 years)	Kindergartens (3-5 years)	Age-integrated institutions (0-2 years)	Age-integrated institutions (3-5 years)
DKK 27,557 (£2,967)	DKK 32,872 (£3,539)	DKK 25,912 (£2,790)	DKK 18,162 (£1,955)	DKK 33,070 (£3,560)	DKK 18,979 (£2,043)

Parents on low incomes receive an additional subsidy (an ‘aided place subsidy’) from the local authority. Parents with more than one child enrolled in preschool age care are granted a discount – they pay the full price of the most expensive place and 50% on the other places.²⁴³ Parents with children in after-school facilities and SFO’s are also eligible for the siblings discount.

The income-related fees subsidy is linked to a nationally set and progressive scale: in 2012, parents with an annual household income of DKK 485,500 (£52,270) or above pay the full fee, parents with earnings between DKK 312,226 – 315,690 (£33,615 – £33,988) pay 50% of the fee and parents with earning of DKK 156,301 (£16,828) or lower are exempt from ECEC fees. There is an additional subsidy for single parents.²⁴⁴

Places in after-school centres are also subsidised. Local authorities must cover at least 70% of the budgeted gross operating costs; parent payments must not exceed 30% of the budgeted gross operating costs.²⁴⁵ In contrast, school-based free time facilities (SFOs) are not centrally regulated with a fixed parental contribution; instead this is decided by each local authority. Consequently, these fees are often used to plug shortfalls in local authority budgets - in 2009 SFO fees were 30% higher than other after school care.²⁴⁶

5.8 Access levels and patterns of use

Children have very high participation rates in ECEC in Denmark. For children below one year, parental care dominates, but many children are enrolled in day care centres from six months.

→ Informal care outside the family is forbidden by law.

In 2011, 19.1% of infants were enrolled in some form of formal ECEC; for one and two year olds the figures were 89.3% and 93.2% respectively, and for three to five year olds it was 97.1%, 97.7% and 96.5%.²⁴⁷

→ Most children attend full-time day care centres: 67% of all one to three year olds and 97% of three to five year olds are enrolled in such facilities.²⁴⁸

²⁴³ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²⁴⁴ Danish national statistics, 2012.

²⁴⁵ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²⁴⁶ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

²⁴⁷ Danish national statistics, 2012; own calculations – the national statistics database lists numbers of children enrolled per setting; they do not provide percentages.

²⁴⁸ Faktaark:Dagtilbud, 2011.

Box 5.5: Enrolment rate of 0-5 year olds in any form of formal ECEC (including full-time and part-time services)

0 year olds:	19.1%
1 year olds:	89.3%
2 year olds:	93.2%
3 year olds:	97.1%
4 year olds:	97.7%
5 year olds:	96.5%

Source: Danish national statistics, 2012; own calculations.

Most preschool children in Denmark attend day-care centres; this is particularly so for children age three to six where enrolment is almost entirely in centre-based care. For the younger children, childminders are more commonly used in rural areas while nurseries and age-integrated facilities are more common in urban areas.²⁴⁹

→ Participation in after school services is also high: 84.4% of six to nine-year-olds attend a school-based free time facility after school.²⁵⁰

Box 5.6: Enrolment rate of 6-9 year olds in after school care services

6 year olds:	92.6%
7 year olds:	90.8%
8 year olds:	87.1%
9 year olds:	76.4%

Source: Danish national statistics, 2012; own calculations

5.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

5.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

Each local authority is responsible for the supervision of ECEC provision. Most organise responsibility within a single administration which oversees care services as well as primary schools and other services for children. These administrative bodies employ pedagogical consultants who work closely with day care managers to develop the quality of services.

→ Parent boards, compulsory in all public day care, are also a key aspect of quality assurance. The head of the day care facility is accountable to both the board of parents and the municipality.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Danish national statistics, 2012.

²⁵⁰ Danish national statistics 2012.

²⁵¹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Vejledning om dagtilbud, fritidshjem og klubtilbud*, Copenhagen, 2009.

Danish tradition has been to emphasise the quality of the institution rather than to monitor the learning achievement of each child. Since 2004, all day care facilities and all childminders (public and private) are required to offer an educational curriculum. There are required themes which must be addressed, such as language, personal development, and social competencies, but the individual centre decides how these themes will be implemented. Since 2007, local authorities must offer a language assessment to three year olds if there are linguistic, behavioural or other factors suggesting that the child may be in need of language stimulation. Also all children who are not attending a day care facility must receive a language assessment. If the language assessment shows sign of need for language stimulation, the local authority must provide the necessary stimulation.²⁵²

All after school facilities must prepare a child environment impact assessment, which must consider the physical, aesthetical and mental child environment and child experience. Management is responsible for writing out the assessment, with staff and parent input. This must be undertaken at least every three years and when changes are implemented, and must be made publicly available.

→ Public childminders are contracted by the municipality to provide the service. They are selected, trained, paid and supervised by the municipality.²⁵³

In cases where private childminders are directly contracted by the child's parents they are not subject to the same rules regarding educational curricula and there are no set rules on prices. If, however, more than two children are looked after, the arrangement must be approved by the local authority.²⁵⁴ Where private childminders enter into an agreement with the municipality they are subject to the same requirements as public childminders.

There is no national regulation concerning child:staff ratios or about the involvement of qualified staff. In practice, child:staff ratios are low. In 2008, they were as follows:

- Nursery (under-threes): 3.3 children per full-time adult
- Kindergarten (three to six years): 6.5 children per full-time adult
- Age-integrated facility (birth to eighteen years): 6.5 children per full-time adult
- After school centres: 9.4 children per full-time adult
- School free time facilities: 13.5 children per full-time adult.²⁵⁵

5.9.2 Workforce qualifications²⁵⁶

Box 5.7: Main ECEC occupations

Childminder (*dagplejer*)
Pedagogue or educator (*pædagog*)
Pedagogue or educator assistant (*pædagogmedhjælper*)

²⁵² Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²⁵³ Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Vejledning om dagtilbud, fritidshjem og klubtilbud*, Copenhagen, 2009.

²⁵⁴ Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, *Day-care, after-school and club facilities*, 2012.

²⁵⁵ The majority of information in this section comes from Moss and Bennett, 2010.

²⁵⁶ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

→ Pedagogues or educators holding a university degree are the lead personnel in all day care facilities. They account for 60% of staff – the highest rate of professionals of all the Nordic countries. They are supported in their work by pedagogue or educator assistants.

Table 5.3 ECEC workforce qualifications

Type of provider	Staff title	Pre-service education required	Qualification level
<i>Services for children 0-3 years</i>			
Childminding	<i>Dagplejer</i> (daily caretaker) or childminder	3 weeks	Aptitude and past experience rather than a qualification level
Day nursery	<i>Pædagog</i> (pedagogue) or pedagogue / social educator	At least 3.5 years tertiary B college training	Tertiary degree to professional bachelor in social education
	<i>Pædagogmedhjælper</i> (pedagogue assistant)	None but vocational level is offered	Secondary vocational level with a qualification as pedagogical assistant
Integrated service	Same as in day nursery	Same as in day nursery	Tertiary degree in preschool education
<i>Services for children 3-6 years</i>			
Kindergarten	Same as in day nursery	Same as in day nursery	Same as in day nursery
Integrated service	Same as in kindergarten	Same as in kindergarten	Same as in kindergarten
<i>Services for school-age children</i>			
After-school care for children 6-9/12 years	Same as in kindergarten	Same as in kindergarten	Same as in kindergarten

All staff who are in contact with children must have pre-training in ECEC as well as regular in-service training. Educators must have at least 3.5 years at university (ISCED level 5B). There is no minimum qualification for assistants, who are assessed by past experience and aptitude instead. However, some assistants take an 18 month training course. There is no mandatory qualification for childminders but they all must receive at least three weeks of training prior to beginning work.

Most educators and educator assistants are members of trade unions. They usually work 37 hours per week, while childminders usually work 48 hours per week. All staff are entitled to paid holidays, sick leave and parental leave.

Table 5.4: ECEC staff pay (DKK)

	Hourly earnings	Monthly earnings
Child care services managers	264.89 (£29)	42,469.13 (£4,594)
Primary school teachers	235.38 (£25)	37,738.74 (£4,082)
Child care workers	158.41 (£17)	25,397.08 (£2,747)
Teachers aides	175.78 (£19)	28,182.23 (£3,048)

Source: Statbank Denmark, Earnings by salary earners, salary, sector, time, occupation and components, 2010.

5.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy²⁵⁷

1820s First preschool establishments introduced as private initiatives for working families

1850-

1900 Part-time private preschool facilities with more educational aims appeared

1919 State subsidy introduced for institutions with a social purpose

1920 Merging of education and care for young children in the form of 'kindergartens'

1933 State subsidy for institutions increased to 50% of operating costs; municipalities increasingly took responsibility for early childhood services

1949 State subsidy widened to institutions not primarily serving disadvantaged children

1960 Maternity leave introduced

1964 Legal obligation for municipalities to ensure universal access to public services

1976 Social Assistance Act emphasised the right to early childhood education and care and required municipalities to devote resources to ensuring access

1984 Paternity and parental leave introduced

1985 Folkeskole Act on Primary and Secondary Education introduced school free time facilities

1987 Full financial administration of preschool institutions delegated to municipalities

1997 Introduction of father quota for leave

2007 Day Care Facilities Act updated municipality responsibilities for ECEC

²⁵⁷ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

2009 Compulsory school age moved to six years instead of previous seven years

5.11 Conclusion

Denmark has a universal and integrated approach to ECEC: all children age zero to five have a legal entitlement to ECEC and enrolment rates are very high – the highest in Europe. All ECEC services, whether publicly or privately run, are heavily state subsidised, and parent fees are low. The most common form of ECEC is the public day-care centre.

In recent years there has been increased attention to raising the quality of ECEC services but this has been difficult given a simultaneous freeze on increased public investment in the form of a general tax ceiling. Services are being merged into larger units to deliver cost savings. At the same time pedagogical staff have had to increase administrative tasks in order to respond to state requirements for documentation and evaluation of services.²⁵⁸

There has also been interest in boosting the amount of time fathers take on parental leave.

²⁵⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

6 COUNTRY REPORT: NORWAY²⁵⁹

6.1 Key findings

- Norway has a fully integrated, universal ECEC system for all children age one to compulsory school age (six years) that is predominantly state-funded with low parental fees, and thus supports parental employment. There is policy coordination across leave and ECEC, leaving no 'care gap' between the end of parental leave and a child's entitlement to an ECEC place.
- In 2011, 83% of mothers with children age one to two were in employment, of which 44% worked full-time, 27% part-time and 13% were on leave.
- In 2007, about 1% of GDP was devoted to ECEC services.²⁶⁰
- Pregnancy leave and birth leave are funded at either 100% or 80% of earnings.
- Private sector provision constitutes roughly half of ECEC provision. In 2010, 54% of all kindergartens were privately provided and 46% of all children attending kindergarten were in private institutions. Private provision is publicly subsidized to the same extent as public ECEC.
- Public financing of kindergartens in Norway is substantial. Parental fees cover 15% of running costs in municipal kindergartens and 18% of the costs in private kindergartens.
- Parents usually pay a monthly fee, which is capped by the government, for their child's kindergarten place. The maximum fee is decided annually by the Parliament in the annual national budget. In 2012, parent fees have been set at NOK 2,330 (£252) per month and NOK 25,630 (£2,769) per year.
- 89.6% of all children age one to five attended formal ECEC in 2010.
- In 2011, 10% of the ECEC workforce was male. There is an explicit target to increase the proportion of men working in ECEC settings to 20% as part of the aim to educate/socialise children into a gender equal society.
- Informal care is very uncommon in Norway, and the main reasons parents give for their child not attending kindergarten are a shortage of places or the financial situation of the parents. Immigrant families, in particular, often prefer the cash benefit to a kindergarten place, as it offers a key source of income.

²⁵⁹ We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support from Tove Mogstad Slinde, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research for this chapter.

²⁶⁰ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

6.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

Norway is often seen as a beacon in providing high-quality ECEC services for all children with a strong emphasis on a holistic pedagogical approach, outdoors activities and the link between play and learning in a child's development.

→ Similar to the other Nordic nations, Norway has a fully integrated, universal ECEC system for all children age one to school entry that is predominantly state-funded with low parental fees, and thus supports parental employment. There is policy coordination across leave and ECEC, leaving no 'care gap' between the end of parental leave and entitlement to an ECEC place.

In comparison to Sweden and Denmark, Norway's ECEC model developed relatively recently - since the 1990s. During the second half of the 20th century, early years provision in Norway lagged behind developments in the other Nordic countries, particularly with respect to services for the under-threes, displaying somewhat different norms in Norway with regard to the appropriateness of labour market participation of mothers and out-of-home care for small children.

→ An interesting difference to the other Nordic countries is that ownership of ECEC services in Norway has traditionally been a public-private mix since the 1970s, with about half of day care centres privately owned.²⁶¹

During the 1990s and early 2000s a series of government statements and policy initiatives marked a change in perspective on ECEC provision and female employment: in 1995 the Day Care Institution Act set out a national curriculum and a universal framework for ECEC provision, and the 1999 White Paper *Kindergarten for the good of children and parents* set out the aim of offering a full-day place to every child. At that point, priority was given to children with special support needs.

In 2003, the Day Care Act was amended to legally oblige municipalities to provide sufficient early years services. The Day Care Act initiated a 'transformational change' in the Norwegian ECEC model, and ECEC service provision has expanded greatly since the 1990s. Changes have been particularly pronounced with respect to the smallest children: while very few under-threes attended ECEC settings before the 1990s, today the majority of one to three year olds attend full-day kindergartens – an increase in attendance that commentators have described as the 'toddler-invasion'.²⁶²

In recent years, development of ECEC provision has increasingly been influenced by the social investment paradigm, and there is a strong emphasis on the link between early years provision and female employment. On the other hand, there remains a strong child-orientation to ECEC that is part of Norwegian culture. The 2005 Kindergarten Act stipulates that ECEC should be 'pedagogical undertakings' offering children 'opportunities for play, self-expression, 'imparting values and cultures' and helping to ensure that 'all children experience joy and the ability to cope in a social

²⁶¹ See also Ellingsaeter, A., 'Towards universal quality childcare: the Norwegian model.' In L. Gambaro, K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel (eds.) *Equal Access to Childcare: Providing Quality Early Education and Childcare to Disadvantaged Families*, Bristol: Policy Press, forthcoming

²⁶² Ellingsaeter (forthcoming).

and cultural community', whilst also supporting families in the care and the upbringing of their children.²⁶³

6.3 Socio-economic context

Norway is a constitutional monarchy. It is not a member of the EU but trades freely with other European countries as a member of the European Economic Area. Norway has a GDP per capita at 189% of the EU-27 average.²⁶⁴

The population of Norway totals 4.99 million²⁶⁵ with about 16 people per square kilometre.²⁶⁶ The total fertility rate is 1.95.²⁶⁷ 9.3 births occur for every 1000 women age 15-19²⁶⁸ and the mean age of mothers at first birth is 27.6.²⁶⁹ 18.8% of the population is under 15 years of age.²⁷⁰ 8.6% of households are sole parent families.²⁷¹

Box 6.1: Summary of key population statistics²⁷²

Total fertility rate: 1.95
Mean age of mothers at first birth: 27.6
Teenage pregnancies (no. of births per 1000 women age 15-19): 9.3
Child population: 18.8%
Sole parent families (% of all households): 8.6

6.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 79.6% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 3.3% for those age 15-74.

The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 82.1% and for women 77.1%.²⁷³ 11% of employed men work part-time and 30% of employed women.²⁷⁴ It is most common for both men and women to work between 35-39 hours per week (62% of men and 50% of women).²⁷⁵

²⁶³ Government of Norway, 2005, Day Care Institution Act no. 64.

²⁶⁴ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

²⁶⁵ Data from 2012. Eurostat.

²⁶⁶ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

²⁶⁷ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁶⁸ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁶⁹ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁷⁰ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Norway,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²⁷¹ Data from 2001. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁷² These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

²⁷³ Data from 2011, Eurostat.

²⁷⁴ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁷⁵ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

→ In 2011 83% of mothers with children age one to two were in employment, of which 44% worked full-time, 27% part-time and 13% were on leave.

As for mothers with children age three to five, 86% were in employment, of which 45% worked full-time, 29% worked part-time, and 12% were on paid or unpaid leave (if all elements of parental leave are taken, this can last to up to two years).

Among fathers for one to two year olds, 96% were in employment, of which most worked full-time (84%), 7% worked part-time and 5% were on leave. As for fathers of three to five year olds, the employment rate was about the same (96%), full-time employment is considerably higher at 87% compared to part-time employment at 6%.

Employment figures for parents with school children age six to nine are very similar: 86% of mothers were in employment, of which 47% worked full-time and 31% part-time, and 9% are on leave. For fathers, the employment figures were similar to those of the other child age groups.²⁷⁶

Box 6.2: Summary of employment statistics²⁷⁷

Total employment rate: 79.6%
Total unemployment rate: 3.3%
Women's employment rate: 77.1%
Men's employment rate: 82.1%
Employed women working part-time: 30%
Employed men working part-time: 11%
Mothers' employment rate, with children age 1-2: 83%
Of which full-time: 44%
Of which part-time: 27%
Mothers' employment rate, children age 3-5: 86%
Of which full-time: 45%
Of which part-time: 29%
Mothers' employment rate, with children age 6-9: 86%
Of which full-time: 47%
Of which part-time: 31%

²⁷⁶ Moafi, H. and Såheim Björkli, E., *Barnefamiliers tilsynsordninger, høsten 2010*, Rapportør 34-2011, Statistics Norway: Oslo, 2011.

²⁷⁷ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

6.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children²⁷⁸

Overall government expenditure takes up 46% of GDP in Norway.²⁷⁹ As of 2009, public expenditure on social protection made up 26.4% of GDP.²⁸⁰ 2.91% was specifically directed toward families and children.²⁸¹

→ In 2007, about 1% of GDP was devoted to ECEC services.²⁸²

The ratio of income inequality between the top 20% and bottom 20% is 3.4,²⁸³ while the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is 11.7%.²⁸⁴ Income tax on the average worker made up 36.8% of labour cost in 2010.²⁸⁵

Box 6.3: Summary of public expenditure²⁸⁶

Total public expenditure: 46% of GDP
On social protection: 26.4% of GDP
On families and children: 2.91% of GDP
On ECEC: 1% of GDP

The main general social insurance schemes in Norway are the National Insurance Scheme, the Family Allowance Scheme and the scheme providing a cash benefit for families with small children. Anyone who either resides or is employed in Norway is compulsorily insured under the National Insurance Scheme.

The National Insurance Scheme is partly financed by social security contributions, both from employers and the insured, and partly by taxes. Contributions from employees and self-employed persons are calculated on the basis of gross income from employment.

Family benefits in Norway include:

- Child benefit: a universal benefit for all children under the age of 18; equal to NOK 970 (£105) per month and per child;

²⁷⁸ Unless otherwise noted, this material is extracted from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for Norway available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Norway_en.pdf

²⁷⁹ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Norway,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²⁸⁰ Data from 2009. Eurostat.

²⁸¹ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

²⁸² Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

²⁸³ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

²⁸⁴ Share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income) after social transfers. EU-SILC 2010.

²⁸⁵ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Norway,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

²⁸⁶ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

- Cash benefit for families with small children: granted to all children age one to three who are not receiving care in a day care centre funded by a public grant; reduced rates are granted when the child is in a subsidised day-care centre for less than 33 hours per week;
- Childcare benefit: a means-tested benefit granted when a child must be looked after by someone else during working hours or training courses; the benefit amount is set at 64% of actual childcare expenses up to a certain annual ceiling.

6.6 Leave policies for families with small children²⁸⁷

6.6.1 Structure

Leave in Norway is referred to as pregnancy leave, birth leave and parental leave. The terms maternity and paternity leave are not used.

Women are entitled to three weeks before the birth and six weeks following birth. Fathers are entitled to two weeks after the birth dubbed “daddy days” in addition to the fathers’ quota included in parental leave. Parents are entitled to either 47 or 57 weeks depending on payment level (see below). Of these, nine weeks are for mothers as described above, and twelve weeks are for fathers. The remaining 26 or 36 weeks is a family entitlement and may be taken by either parent. Each parent then has the right to one year of unpaid leave in addition to the entitlement described above.

There is no gap between the end of the leave period and entitlement to ECEC.

6.6.2 Payment and funding

→ Pregnancy leave and birth leave are funded at either 100% or 80% of earnings.

Leave is funded from general taxation. “Daddy days” are unpaid by government, payment depending on individual or collective agreements. Parental money may either be taken at 100% or 80% of earnings, up to a ceiling of six times the basic national insurance benefit payment (e.g. €57,564/£46,206 a year). If taken at 100% of earnings the length of leave is reduced by 10 weeks. This is funded from general taxation.

6.6.3 Role of employers

All women employed for six of the last ten months prior to delivery are eligible for leave, as are women who have earned at least half the basic national insurance benefit payment over the previous year. All employed fathers have the right to leave after birth for the ‘daddy days’, but payment is negotiated and paid by the employer.

²⁸⁷ This section draws heavily from the work of Brandth, B. and Kvande, E., ‘Norway.’ In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies 2012*, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012; Brandth, B. and Kvande, E. ‘Norway: the making of the father’s quota.’ In S. Kamerman and P. Moss (eds.) *The Politics of Parental Leave Policies*, Policy Press: Bristol, 2009.

Parental leave is funded from general taxation. It is possible for one or both parents to combine all or part of the parental leave with part-time work or in blocks with the agreement of the employer. There is also a requirement that the mother must have returned to employment or study for the father to take leave beyond the father's quota.

The Work Environment Act grants breastfeeding mothers the right to breastfeeding breaks of up to one hour per day. Parents also have a right to work part-time in order to care for children, until their children are ten years old.

6.6.4 Uptake of parental leave²⁸⁸

All mothers take pre- and post- birth money if they are eligible. Take up for paternity leave is around 89%, though fathers also use annual leave for the period immediately after birth. Take up of the father's quota of parental leave is thought to be around 89%, with 70% of eligible fathers taking more than five weeks. Mothers take up the rest of the paid parental leave entitlement.

6.7 National framework of ECEC

→ In Norway there is an integrated system of ECEC for all children from age one to compulsory school age (six years). Participation is voluntary, but all children have a legal individual entitlement to a preschool (kindergarten) place.

Local authorities (municipalities) are responsible for the development and supervision of public and private kindergartens and must ensure there are sufficient places for all children.

6.7.1 Governance

Prior to 2005, kindergartens fell under the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, but they have since been transferred to the Ministry of Education and Research, which oversees the entire education sector.

Administrative responsibility of kindergartens falls to the municipalities, which are responsible for the development and supervision of private and municipal kindergartens. They are also responsible for ensuring that kindergartens are run according to goals set by the central government under the Kindergarten Act (2005).

The Kindergarten Act governs all kindergartens, public and private, which must be approved by the municipality. In accordance with the Act, a Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens was also introduced, which sets out the fundamental principles, goals, contents and activities for all kindergartens.²⁸⁹

→ Since 1984, municipalities have had a legal obligation to ensure a sufficient number of kindergarten places. In 2009 an amendment introduced a legal

²⁸⁸ Danielsen, K. and Lappegård, T., 'Tid er viktig når barn blir født - om ulik bruk av lønnet fødselspermisjon, *Samfunnsspeilet* 5, Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2003.

²⁸⁹ European Commission, 'Norway,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

individual entitlement to a kindergarten place. Municipalities are obliged to provide a place for every child from the age of one year.²⁹⁰

→ In order to ensure collaboration with the children's homes, all kindergartens must have a parents' council and a coordinating committee.

6.7.2 Types of services

Box 6.4: Types of ECEC services²⁹¹

Kindergartens (barnehager) - half-day or full-day full-year service for children 1-6 years

Family kindergartens (familiebarnehager) – childminding or family day care service

Open kindergartens (åpen barnehager) – drop-in centres for parent and child

Out-of-school care (skolefritidsordningen, or SFOs) – leisure time activities for school-age children (age 6-11) before and after school

The main form of ECEC for preschool age children is the kindergarten, a preschool institution which provides half- or full-day early childhood education and care. These kindergartens may be divided into age groups (either zero to two years or three to five years) or may consist of mixed age groups for children age zero to five years.

The formal kindergarten year begins in August, along with the primary school year, but kindergartens may continue to operate during winter and summer holidays. They are usually open at least 41 hours per week Monday – Friday; opening at about 7.00 or 8.00 a.m. and closing at 17.00 or 18.00.²⁹²

Some children, usually under the age of three years, receive ECEC in a childminding setting, called a family kindergarten. It is organised in a private residence, with a smaller number of children and an assistant under the supervision of a preschool teacher who may be responsible for several homes. There are also 'open kindergartens' or drop-in centres where parents may accompany their children, primarily for socialisation purposes.²⁹³

Children of school-age may attend out-of-school care called SFOs, which are leisure time activities provided before and after school.

6.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

Kindergartens may be provided by the municipality or by private groups such as firms, commercial providers, parent groups and non-profit organisations. Municipalities are responsible for the supervision and approval of both public and private kindergartens.

²⁹⁰ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011; The Kindergarten Act no. 64 of June 2005.

²⁹¹ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Norway.' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.

²⁹² European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

²⁹³ European Commission, 2011.

→ Private sector provision constitutes roughly half of ECEC provision. In 2010, 54% of all kindergartens were privately provided and 46% of all children attending kindergarten were in private institutions.²⁹⁴

In 2008, private provision included:²⁹⁵

- congregations (7.1%)
- parents (21.9%)
- associations of housewives, social welfare, and others (1.3%)
- enterprises (15.1%)
- pedagogical/ideological organisations (3.5%)
- individual persons (34%)
- others (17.1%)

6.7.4 Financing and costs

→ Public financing of kindergartens in Norway is substantial. Kindergartens are primarily financed through grants from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Parental fees cover 15% of running costs in municipal kindergartens and 18% of the costs in private kindergartens.²⁹⁶

In 2008, 17% of municipal kindergarten costs were covered by parental fees, 52% by central state funding and 31% by local municipal assets.

Financing is administered by municipalities. All kindergartens (public and private) must be approved by municipalities and may receive grants to cover part of their operating costs. In 2003, a law was passed requiring equal treatment of public and private providers with regard to public funding. Previously municipalities were not obliged to fund private providers, so fees were higher for parents using these services.

From 2004, a maximum fee was introduced for all ECEC settings, making private providers dependent on public funding.²⁹⁷ Beginning in January 2011, state grants earmarked specifically for kindergartens were replaced with general block grants to the municipalities.²⁹⁸

The survey *Telemarksforskning* has calculated the average running costs for kindergartens for the year 2010 as follows:²⁹⁹

Private kindergartens (full-day places):

²⁹⁴ Moffat and Såheim Björkli, *Barnefamiliers tilsynsordningers, høsten 2010*, Statistics Norway, 2011; Norwegian official sources distinguish between public and private providers, but in general do not distinguish between for-profit and non-profit private providers.

²⁹⁵ Jacobsen, K. and Vollset, G. 'Publicly available and supported early education and care for all in Norway.' In E. Lloyd and H. Penn (eds.) *Childcare markets: can they deliver an equitable service?* Bristol: Policy Press, 2012. p.126.

²⁹⁶ Personal communication from Tove Mogstad Slinde, Ministry of Education and Research, October 2012.

²⁹⁷ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

²⁹⁸ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

²⁹⁹ Communication from Tove Mogstad Slinde, Ministry of Education and Research.

- Costs for zero to two year olds: NOK 184,443 (£19,929)
- Costs for three to six year olds: NOK 92,221 (£9,964)

Municipal kindergartens (full-day places):

- Costs for zero to two year olds: NOK 200,915 (£21,708)
- Costs for three to six year olds: NOK 100,457 (£10,854)

→ Parents usually pay a monthly fee, which is capped by the government, for their child's kindergarten place. The maximum fee is decided annually by the Parliament in the annual national budget. In 2012, parent fees have been set at NOK 2,330 (£252) per month and NOK 25,630 (£2,769) per year (this was the same as in 2011).³⁰⁰

Parents with more than one child enrolled in kindergarten are entitled to a fee reduction (by 30% for the second child and 50% for the third and subsequent children). Municipalities must also offer fee reductions for parents on low incomes.³⁰¹

Parents of children (one to two years old) who do not attend kindergarten full-time, but are cared for at home may receive a cash benefit instead. This is in addition to a general family allowance for all families with children age zero to 18.³⁰² Parents may also benefit from tax deductions to help cover the cost of fees.³⁰³ OECD estimates place net childcare costs, after benefits, at 11% of average family income.³⁰⁴

For after school care services (SFO) no current cost calculations for all of Norway exist. The municipal data base KOSTRA has produced such calculations for the year 2003 (average over all municipalities excluding Oslo): the costs for six to nine year olds in SFO was NOK 18,794 (£2,031).³⁰⁵

6.8 Access levels and patterns of use

All Norwegian children age one to five are entitled to a kindergarten place, and kindergarten attendance is very high. Paid parental leave constitutes almost one year, so few infants are placed in an ECEC setting before this time.

→ 89.6% of all children age one to five attended formal ECEC in 2010.

Attendance is highest among five year olds (98%) and lowest among one year olds (65%). On average, 96% of three to five year olds and 79% of one to two year olds

³⁰⁰ Jacobsen, K. and Vollset, G., 'Publicly available and supported early education and care for all in Norway.' In E. Lloyd and H. Penn (eds.) *Childcare Markets: Do They Deliver an Equitable Service?* Bristol: The Policy Press, 2012, p. 119; Communication from Tove Mogstad Slinde, Ministry of Education and Research.

³⁰¹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁰² European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³⁰³ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁰⁴ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008. OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, 2011.

³⁰⁵ Personal communication from Maren Hegna, Norwegian Government; KOSTRA databank, Statistics Norway.

were enrolled in kindergartens.³⁰⁶ The majority of children age one to five (87%) attend kindergarten full-time (41 hours or more per week), but most children have an actual participation between 25 and 41 hours per week. On average, preschool children (one to five year olds) spend 35 hours per week in kindergartens.³⁰⁷

In line with the Norwegian government's aims to expand ECEC services, attendance in formal ECEC among one to five year olds has increased significantly in recent years, from 62% in 2000 to 89.6% in 2010.³⁰⁸

61% of children age six to nine year olds (classes p1 – p4) were enrolled in after-school care in 2010, of which 56% attended on a full-time basis and 44% on a part-time basis. Participation in SFO (both on a full-time and a part-time basis) is higher for six to seven year olds than for the age group eight to nine year olds. Around 45% of the first age group were in full-time SFO and 30% in part-time SFO respectively, while, among nine year olds, 11% attended full-time SFO and 17% attended part-time SFO.³⁰⁹

Box 6.5: ECEC enrolment

All children age 1-5 years: 89.6%³¹⁰

1-2 years: 79.5%

3-5 years: 96.5%

All children age 6-9 in after school care: 61%³¹¹

Of which attend full-time: 56%

Of which attend part-time: 44%

Proportion of all children age 0-2 in ECEC arrangements:³¹²

Formal: 0 hours (52%), 1-29 hours (10%); 30 or more (37%)

Average hours per week (formal): 33

Other: 0 hours (95%), 1-29 hours (4%); 30 or more (1%)

Parents: 47%

Proportion of all children age 3-compulsory school age in ECEC arrangements:³¹³

Formal: 0 hours (19%), 1-29 hours (15%); 30 or more (65%)

Average hours per week (formal): 33.6

Other: 0 hours (97%), 1-29 hours (2%); 30 or more (1%)

Parents: 17%

³⁰⁶ Moafi, H. and Såheim Björkli, E., *Barnefamiliers tilsynsordninger, høsten 2010*, Statistisk sentralbyrå, Statistics Norway: Oslo, 2011, p. 10. This survey provides the most recent data available on Norwegian ECEC, documents provided by Tove Mogstad Slinde, Ministry of Education and Research.

³⁰⁷ Moafi and Såheim Björkli, 2011, p. 5.

³⁰⁸ Moafi and Såheim Björkli, 2011, p. 10.

³⁰⁹ Moafi and Såheim Björkli, 2011, p. 64.

³¹⁰ Data from December 2011. Statistics Norway, 2012. Available at: <http://www.ssb.no>

³¹¹ Data from December 2011. Statistics Norway, 2012.

³¹² EU-SILC data from 2010. Formal arrangements: preschool, centre-based out-of-school care, day care centre; Other arrangements: childminder in child's or provider's home, other family members, friends/neighbours.

³¹³ EU-SILC data from 2010. Formal arrangements: preschool, centre-based out-of-school care, day care centre; Other arrangements: childminder in child's or provider's home, other family members, friends/neighbours.

→ Informal care is very uncommon in Norway, and the main reasons parents give for their child not attending kindergarten are a shortage of places or the financial situation of the parents. Immigrant families, in particular, often prefer the cash benefit to a kindergarten place, as it offers a key source of income.³¹⁴

Of all one to five year olds, only 10.4% are in care outside formal ECEC (this figure includes both parental care and informal care provided by relatives or others). This mainly results from parental preferences during the first two years of their child's life: 33% of one-year olds are cared for by their parents, 1% by relatives and 2% by nannies (or other informal solutions). For two year olds parental care reduces to 8%, care by relatives to 0% and other solutions to 1%. For three year olds the figures are 4%, 0% and 1% respectively and for four and five year olds, parental care reduces further to 2%, care by relatives to 0% and other solutions to 1%.³¹⁵

6.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

6.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

The approval, supervision and guidance of individual kindergartens (public and private) are the responsibility of the municipality, which must ensure that each kindergarten complies with state requirements, such as establishing an annual pedagogical plan. County Governors (at the regional level) carry out inspections of the municipalities to ensure they are carrying out their legal obligations.³¹⁶

The 2008-2009 White Paper *Quality in ECEC* announced the development of a national system to monitor quality in kindergartens as well as to compile an annual national report on the kindergarten sector.³¹⁷

The Kindergarten Act, which came into force in 2006, regulates all kindergartens (public and private), which must be approved by municipalities. In accordance with the Act, a Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens was also introduced, which sets out the fundamental principles, goals, contents and activities for all kindergartens.³¹⁸

Kindergartens are expected to take a holistic view of care and learning. The Framework Plan recommends seven learning areas for all children:

- Communication, language and text
- Body, movement and health
- Art, culture and creativity
- Nature, environment and techniques
- Ethics, religion and philosophy
- Local community and society
- Numbers, spaces and shapes

³¹⁴ Moafi and Såheim Björkli, 2011.

³¹⁵ Moafi and Såheim Björkli, 2011, p. 20.

³¹⁶ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³¹⁷ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³¹⁸ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

The Framework Plan recommends play and social activities as key opportunities for learning and development, but staff are able to choose the specific methods by which the national plan is carried out. Each kindergarten must set out an annual plan for the educational programme based on the national framework. Children's progress is not formally evaluated, but teachers give informal evaluations to parents once or twice a year.³¹⁹

In addition to the annual education plan, kindergartens are subject to requirements regarding child-staff ratios. For children age zero to three years, one trained preschool pedagogue may attend to 7-9 children at once. For children age three to six years, 14-18 children may be looked after per one trained pedagogue. For all adult staff members the ratio is four children per adult. In family kindergartens no more than five children over three years may be looked after at once, and fewer if the children are younger than three years. A trained preschool pedagogue must also be available for every 30 children in family kindergartens.³²⁰

On average, a kindergarten will have two to three staff for a group of 14-18 children over three years, and two to three staff for a group of seven to nine younger children.³²¹ In 2011 on average the group size of mixed-age kindergarten groups was 17.6 children, for kindergarten groups of small children (zero to two years) 12.4 and of older children 18.7 children.³²²

6.9.2 Workforce qualifications

Under the Kindergarten Act, there should be at least one qualified kindergarten teacher per 14-18 children over three years, and one qualified kindergarten teacher per 7-9 children under three years.³²³ Teachers are normally required to undergo a three-year tertiary level training period.

Assistants, who make up the bulk of staff in contact with children, are not required to have any formal qualification, but increasing numbers hold either secondary vocational or tertiary level diplomas. In 2011, 32% of kindergarten staff in contact with children were qualified teachers. A further 4% of staff had some other relevant higher education. Family day carers and staff in out-of-school SFOs are not required to have a particular qualification. The child/staff ratio was 3.9 children per staff in municipal kindergartens and four children per staff in private kindergartens.³²⁴

→ In 2011, 10% of the ECEC workforce was male. There is an explicit target to increase the proportion of men working in ECEC settings to 20% as part of the aim to educate/socialise children into a gender equal society.³²⁵

³¹⁹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³²⁰ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³²¹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³²² Utdanningsdirektoratet, *Utdanningsspeilet. Tall og analyse av grunnopplaerngen i Norge*, Oslo, 2012, p.106.

³²³ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³²⁴ Utdanningsdirektoratet, *Utdanningsspeilet. Tall og analyse av grunnopplaerngen i Norge*, 2012, p. 109.

³²⁵ Utdanningsdirektoratet, *Utdanningsspeilet. Tall og analyse av grunnopplaerngen i Norge*, 2012, p.110.

Table 6.1: ECEC workforce qualifications

Occupation	Qualification
Kindergarten teacher	3 year bachelor degree from a tertiary college
Child/youth worker	Educated to secondary vocational level
Kindergarten assistant	No formal education required
Family day carer/childminder	No required qualification, but must be supervised by a qualified preschool teacher on a weekly basis
Out-of-school free-time pedagogue	No national requirement; decided on an local basis

Source: Moss & Bennett, 2010.

About 80% of trained kindergarten teachers are members of the teachers' union *Utdanningsforbund*, the Union of Education Norway. Assistants are members of the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees, or *Fagforbundet*. Nevertheless, the status, pay and working conditions of kindergarten staff are less favourable than those of primary school teachers.

There are no statutory requirements for staff to receive on-going training or professional development, but many kindergartens have implemented internal staff development programmes.

Box 6.6: ECEC workforce average annual income ³²⁶
Preschool teacher: starting salary between NOK 308,100 – 326,200 (2008) (between £33,289 – 35,245)
Kindergarten assistant: NOK 310,800 (2011) (£33,581)
Primary school teacher: starting salary of NOK 361,400 (2011) (£39,048)

6.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy³²⁷

1837 First centres offering full-time care and supervision for children from two years of age introduced

1920-

1930 Increase in centres; crèches for lone mothers established

1920 First public kindergarten established

1954 First national regulations regarding day care services introduced

1909 Maternity leave introduced (six weeks)

1975 First Kindergarten Act

³²⁶ See employment portal available at: <http://www.jobbfeber.no>.

³²⁷ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

1977 Extension of maternity leave to 18 weeks, twelve of which could be shared between the parents. Fathers granted right to take two weeks unpaid leave at the time of child's birth ('daddy days')

Late 1980s/early 1990s

Extension of parental leave schemes to include individual entitlement

1995 Kindergarten Act set out first national curriculum framework

1999 White paper *Kindergarten for the good of children and parents* set out the aim of offering a kindergarten place for every child, with priority given to those with special needs

2005 Kindergarten Act, followed by new regulations: *Framework plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens*

2010 Kindergarten Act set out the social and educational goals of the kindergartens

2011 Parental money period extended to 47/57 weeks, with twelve weeks father's quota

6.11 Conclusion

Norway has a universal, integrated approach to early childhood education and care where all children of preschool age have a social right to high-quality full-time and predominantly publicly-funded provision.

There has been a 'silent revolution' in recent years with a massive increase of participation of the youngest children in kindergarten centres, and there is current debate in Norway regarding how early years pedagogy and practice should be adapted to meet the needs of one-year olds.³²⁸

Another issue that has been heatedly debated is the 'cash for care' benefit, with proponents arguing that parents wish to look after their children themselves when they are very small, and opponents pointing to the negative impact it has on mothers' employment and social integration of women and children from immigrant backgrounds.

When the 'cash for care' benefit was first introduced a high proportion of parents took this entitlement. Its use has, however, declined over the last decade: in 1999 75% of parents of one to two year olds received the benefit; in 2011 it was only 25%. This decline has been linked to the extensive expansion of kindergarten places and reduced parent fees suggesting that kindergarten services are parents' preferred option.³²⁹ In August 2012, the Norwegian government restricted the length of the 'cash for care' benefit to the first year of the child's life (up to 23 months of age).³³⁰

³²⁸ Utdanningsdirektoratet, *Utdanningsspeilet. Tall og analyse av grunnopplaerngen i Norge*, 2012, .p. 113.

³²⁹ See Ellingsaeter (forthcoming).

³³⁰ Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2012.

There is on-going debate about the nature of the father's quota and about increasing leave for mothers in the parental leave system as well as increasing the proportion of men working in the early years sector.

7 COUNTRY REPORT: SLOVENIA³³¹

7.1 Key Findings

- Slovenia has an integrated system of ECEC for children from age one (following the end of statutory maternity leave) to age six (when compulsory schooling begins).
- Approximately 6% of GDP is intended for the entire system of education, with 0.65% devoted to the preschool system in particular.
- 81.9% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed in 2011, compared to 93.3% of fathers.
- Parental leave is a form of social insurance, paid partly through employer and employee contributions and partly through state financing. It is obligatory to take maternity leave in Slovenia. Fathers are entitled to paternity leave and parents may access family parental leave.
- ECEC services in Slovenia are predominantly publicly provided. Only 3.1% of children were enrolled in private preschool centres in 2011-2012.
- Formal ECEC provision is predominantly in preschools and on a full-day basis.
- Informal care is unusual for children age three to school-start but common for the youngest age cohort: over half of one year olds are cared for by their parents, relatives or in other informal care arrangements; less than one in three of two year olds and one in ten of three year olds are in informal care.
- Local authorities are responsible for ensuring adequate provision of preschool places, either through direct provision or providing funding to private providers and subsidising the cost to parents. Parents are not guaranteed a place for their children.
- Access levels meet the EU targets; they are considerably lower for one year olds than for two to five year olds.
- ECEC is a mixed economy financed by the state and by parents, with parents contributing on average one-third to the costs. For special services, such as out-of-school services or the delivery of the preschool programme in a childminding setting, parents pay full fees.
- Each preschool class is instructed by a teacher and an assistant. All preschool teachers must have at least three years of higher education in pre-primary education or a four-year university degree in another field with specialisation in pre-primary education.

³³¹ We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support from Nada Pozar Matijasic, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport for this chapter.

7.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ Slovenia has an integrated system of early education and care for children from age one (following the end of statutory maternity leave) to age six (when compulsory schooling begins).

The current ECEC system grew out of three main influences: recognition of the interrelation between care and education, major political change (independence) which stimulated debate about policy reform, and consensus that early childhood services should fall under education.³³²

Prior to independence in 1991, preschool services were intended as a support for working families. In 1993, as part of educational reform, responsibility for preschool services was transferred from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education and Sport (now called the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport) which represented a shift in emphasis from parents' needs to children's rights.³³³ The 1996 White Paper on Education drew on comparisons to other countries with integrated systems of ECEC, such as the Nordic countries and New Zealand, and emphasised the role of learning in the development of children of all ages.³³⁴

7.3 Socio-economic context

Slovenia has been a democratic parliamentary republic since its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and an EU member since 2004. Slovenia's economic development has been very successful since independence³³⁵ with a GDP per capita at 84% of the EU-27 average.³³⁶

Slovenia has a population of 2.1 million³³⁷ with about 102 people per square kilometre.³³⁸ The total fertility rate is 1.56.³³⁹ 5.1 births occur for every 1000 women age 15-19³⁴⁰ and the mean age of mothers at first birth is 28.8.³⁴¹ Two thirds (67.3%) of first-born children are born to unmarried mothers³⁴² and 7% of children live in sole parent households.³⁴³

³³² Kaga, Y., Bennett, J. and Moss, P., *Caring and Learning Together: A cross-national study on the integration of early childhood care and education within education*, UNESCO, Paris, 2010.

³³³ Children in Europe, 'The trailblazers: integrating "education and "care" in Scandinavia and Slovenia.' in *Welcome to our world: early childhood education and care services for children under 3*, Children in Scotland, 2012.

³³⁴ Kaga et al., 2010.

³³⁵ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: Slovenia.' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010.,p.37.

³³⁶ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

³³⁷ Data from 2012. Eurostat.

³³⁸ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

³³⁹ Data for 2011. Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), 2012.

³⁴⁰ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

³⁴¹ Data for 2011. SORS, 2012.

³⁴² Data for 2011. SORS, 2012.

³⁴³ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

Box 7.1: Summary of key population statistics³⁴⁴

Total fertility rate: 1.57
Teenage pregnancies: 5.1
Mean age of mothers at first birth: 28.2
Child population: 13.8%
Children in lone parent households: 7%

7.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 68.4% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 8.2% for those age 15-74. The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 71.8% and for women 64.8%.³⁴⁵

Part-time work is relatively uncommon for both men and women: 6.7% of employed men work part-time and 10.9% of employed women work part-time.³⁴⁶ The vast majority of both men and women work over 40 hours per week (90% of men and 84% of women in 2010).³⁴⁷

→ This is also the case for parents: 76.8% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 78.6% of men. 81.9% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed, compared to 93.3% of fathers.³⁴⁸

Few parents work part-time. Only 12% of mothers with a child under six years, and 2.5% of similar fathers are employed on a part-time basis.³⁴⁹

Box 7.2: Summary of employment statistics

Total employment rate: 68.4%
Total unemployment rate: 8.2%
Women's employment rate: 64.8%
Men's employment rate: 71.8%
Mothers' employment rate: 81.9%
Fathers' employment rate: 93.3%

7.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children

The Slovenian social security system encompasses social insurance, family benefits and the social assistance scheme. Social insurance schemes consist of mandatory

³⁴⁴ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

³⁴⁵ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

³⁴⁶ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, 2011.

³⁴⁷ OECD Family Database, 2011.

³⁴⁸ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

³⁴⁹ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

pension and invalidity insurance, mandatory health insurance, unemployment insurance and parental protection insurance. These are compulsory for all employed persons and for self-employed persons. The system is financed from social security contributions paid by employees and employers.

Overall government expenditure takes up 49% of GDP in Slovenia.³⁵⁰ As of 2010, public expenditure on social protection made up almost one quarter of GDP (€8.8 billion or £7.1 billion).³⁵¹

The ratio of income inequality between the top 20% and bottom 20% is 3.5,³⁵² while the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is 12.6%.³⁵³ Income tax on the average worker made up 42.4% of labour cost in 2010.³⁵⁴

Most social protection expenditure is delivered through cash (€5.8 billion or £4.7 billion) rather than in-kind benefits (€2.8 billion or £2.3 billion).³⁵⁵

→ 2.2% of GDP (€7.7 billion or £6.2 billion) was specifically directed toward families and children.³⁵⁶

→ Approximately 6% of GDP is intended for the entire system of education, with 0.65% devoted to the preschool system in particular.³⁵⁷

Box 7.3: Summary of public expenditure³⁵⁸

Total public expenditure: 49% of GDP

On social protection: almost 25% of GDP

On families and children: 2.2% of GDP

On preschool education: 0.65% of GDP

Family benefits are cash benefits provided at childbirth, for further child raising and special benefits for disabled children. Slovenia has:

- Parental allowances: a monthly flat-rate benefit of €196.49 (£158) for parents who are not entitled to parental benefits from the parental protection insurance scheme;

³⁵⁰ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Slovenia,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

³⁵¹ Data for 2010. SORS, 2012.

³⁵² Data from 2010. Eurostat.

³⁵³ Share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income) after social transfers. EU-SILC 2010.

³⁵⁴ OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Slovenia,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

³⁵⁵ SORS, *Expenditure and receipt of social protection schemes, Slovenia, 2010 - provisional data*, 2012.

³⁵⁶ Data for 2010. SORS, 2012.

³⁵⁷ Kaga et al., 2010.

³⁵⁸ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

- The Childbirth Grant (*pomoč ob rojstvu otroka*): a one-time benefit of €280.75 (£225) for the purchase of clothing and other necessities for a newborn whose father or mother is permanently residing in Slovenia;
- Child Benefit (*otroški dodatek*): a means-tested benefit paid to help parents provide for the maintenance and education/training of a child; it is only paid to those who earn below the average national wage;
- Large Family Allowance (*dodatek za veliko družino*): an annual benefit paid to families with three or more children under the age of 18 (or 26 if they are in full-time education or training); € 393.46 (£316) is paid for a family with three children; €479.83 (£385) for a family with four or more children;
- Special Childcare Allowance (*dodatek za nego otroka, ki potrebuje posebno nego in varstvo*): a cash benefit intended to cover part of the increased cost of a family with a child who requires special care; it is usually a monthly allowance of €101.05 (£81), but may be doubled for children with a severe physical or mental disability.³⁵⁹

7.6 Leave policies for families with small children³⁶⁰

→ Parental leave is a form of social insurance, paid partly through employer and employee contributions and partly through state financing.

Leave policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs.

7.6.1 Structure

Types of parental leave (*starševski dopust*) in Slovenia are: maternity leave (*porodniški dopust*), paternity leave (*očetovski dopust*), parental (childcare) leave (*dopust za nego in varstvo otroka*) and adopter's leave (*posvojiteljski dopust*).

Maternity leave lasts 105 days and parental leave 246 days, or 520 days if taken as half-time leave, and 90 days of paternity leave. Each parent is entitled to half of parental leave and it may be transferred between parents upon agreement.³⁶¹

→ It is obligatory to take maternity leave in Slovenia.

The leave consists of four weeks before the birth and eleven weeks following birth. In certain special cases, the father is entitled to maternity leave.

→ Fathers are entitled to 90 calendar days of paternity leave (about 13 weeks).

³⁵⁹ This material is extracted from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for Slovenia is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Slovenia_en.pdf

³⁶⁰ This section draws heavily from the work of Stropnik, N., 'Slovenia.' In Peter Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2012*. International Network on Leave Policies and Research, 2012.

³⁶¹ Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (SMESCS), October 2012.

The first 15 days may only be taken as full-time leave during the child's first six months. The remaining 75 days may be taken as full-time leave up to the child's third birthday.

→ Parents also have 260 calendar days (about 37 weeks) per family parental leave.

Only one parent is generally entitled to take leave (with some exceptions such as in case of multiple births or if a child is in need of special care), and this is usually the mother.

Up to 75 days of parental leave may be taken at any time up to the child's eighth birthday, full-time, part-time, or by individual days. If taken individually, the length of leave is equal to 70% of the eligible calendar days, similar to paternity leave. Parental leave may also be taken as 520 days of half-time leave combined with part-time work; if so, the cash benefit is reduced accordingly.

Parental leave may be extended under various circumstances. For premature births, the leave may be extended in line with the number of days the pregnancy was shortened. If there are multiple births, or if the child is disabled, leave may be extended by 90 days per child. If parents already have two children under eight years, leave is extended by 30 days; 60 days for three children and 90 days for four or more children.

Box 7.4: Summary of leave arrangements	
Maternity leave	15 weeks: 4 weeks before birth and 11 weeks after birth; obligatory
Paternity leave	13 weeks; first 15 days may only be taken full-time during the child's first six months
Parental leave	37 weeks per family
Adoption leave	21 weeks for 1-4 year old; 17 weeks for 4-10 year old

7.6.2 Payment and funding

Leave is funded partly from parental leave insurance which forms part of social security insurance; contributions are 0.1% of gross earnings for employees and employers. In 2008, parental leave insurance covered an estimated 11% of leave costs. The remainder is paid from the state budget.

Maternity leave is paid at 100% of average earnings, based on earnings on which parental leave contributions were paid during the previous twelve months. If contributions were paid for less than twelve months, 55% of the minimum wage is taken into account for the missing period. There is no ceiling, and the minimum leave payment is 55% of the minimum wage.

Women not insured at the time the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least twelve months in the three years before maternity leave, receive 55 to 105% of

the minimum wage (approximately €420 to €801/£337 to £643 per month), depending on their insured period. This is similarly the case for paternity and parental leave, for the first 15 days.

Prior to the Public Finance Balance Act which was implemented in June 2012, during maternity leave, childcare leave, and the first 15 days of paternity leave, income compensation amounted to 100% of the average monthly gross wage of the entitled person during the twelve months prior to the leave, or the average basis from which the parental leave contributions were paid. The Public Finance Balance Act reduced the payment to 90% for parents earning more than €762 (£612) a month.³⁶² The Act also lowered the ceiling for these payments from 2.5 times to two times the average wage in Slovenia (approximately €3,865/£3,102 per month).

For the remaining 75 days of paternity leave, the father receives social security contributions based on the minimum wage (approximately €169/£136 per month).

Box 7.5: Summary of payment for leave	
	Payment
Maternity leave	100% of average earnings
Paternity leave	90% of average earnings for first 15 days; remainder of leave – social security contributions based on minimum wage
Parental leave	90% of average earnings for first 15 days
Adoption leave	Same as parental leave

7.6.3 Role of employers

→ In addition to family benefits parents are also entitled to a childcare sick leave: an insured person is entitled to take leave to care for an immediate family member who is ill.

Seven working days may be taken for each episode of illness, 15 working days for a disabled child or a child below the age of seven years. In exceptional circumstances, leave may be extended to 14-30 working days or up to six months in extreme cases. Such leave is paid at 80% of average earnings over the previous year.

→ Parents taking care of a child under three years, or a disabled child under 18 years have the right to work part-time (equal to or longer than half full-time working hours).

Social security contributions based on the minimum wage continue to be paid for the hours not worked. A parent with two children may extend the right to work part-time until the younger child turns six.

³⁶² Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

Breastfeeding mothers working full-time have a right to at least a one hour break during working time. The Labour Relations Act holds that the right to salary compensation for break time for breastfeeding must be in accordance with the regulations governing parental leave, but the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act does not regulate this issue.³⁶³

A parent who leaves the labour market to take care of four or more children is entitled to social security contributions (based on the minimum wage) paid by the state until the youngest child turns ten.

7.6.4 Uptake of leave

As of spring 2010, 75% of fathers took the 15-day paternity leave and 90% of mothers took three months of maternity leave.³⁶⁴ Research suggests that fathers do not take up the other 75 days due to it being poorly compensated. 21% of paternity leave takers took more than 15 days in 2010.

Nearly all mothers take parental leave and 6.3% fathers took a part of this leave in 2010.

7.7 National framework of ECEC

7.7.1 Governance

Slovenia has a unitary system of provision for all children age one to six, which falls under the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

This preschool system is governed by the Preschool Education Institutions Act and the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (adopted in 1996, but since amended).³⁶⁵

Legislation implementation and regulation are the responsibility of the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport which forms part of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

Support for teacher training is organised by the Service for Development of Personnel in Education. Programmes are monitored by the National Education Institute, and the Educational Research Institute conducts research on child development. The Association of Preschool Institutions is a network for preschool staff to coordinate and develop the profession.³⁶⁶

→ Local authorities (municipalities) are responsible for ensuring adequate provision of preschool places, either through direct provision or providing funding to private providers and subsidising the cost to parents.³⁶⁷

³⁶³ Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁶⁴ Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁶⁵ Eurydice, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2009.

³⁶⁶ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁶⁷ Children in Europe, 2012.

Preschools are managed by a head teacher who is appointed by the Preschool Institution Council. The Council includes representatives from preschool staff, the municipality, and parents. There are also parents' councils which organise parents' interests through elected representatives from each preschool class.

7.7.2 Types of services

→ The dominant form of ECEC provision in Slovenia is the public preschool. Full-time services provided by the local municipality are available to all children from ages one to six (when they begin school).

Publicly provided preschools may be organised as independent units or may be attached to primary schools.

→ Preschool centres may also be provided privately and are eligible for public funding, but very few private facilities are in operation.

The preschool programme is usually available for nine hours per day, but centres may operate for longer. For example, some children attend 'additional activities' (similar to after-school services) after the programme is finished while their parents are working. Such services are operated depending on parental interest, and the decision rests with the Preschool and Parent Councils.³⁶⁸ Some centres are also open on Saturdays or late at night.³⁶⁹

→ In certain circumstances children may receive the preschool programme in a childminding setting.

Education-based childminding may be provided where there are insufficient places in a centre. The programme may be organised by public or private preschool institutions and the worker must meet the same qualifications as preschool staff. For children age one to three, they must meet either the requirements of a preschool assistant or a preschool teacher; and for children age three to six they must meet the requirements of a preschool teacher (see section 6.2). In practice very few children use this service (less than 1%), most of whom are below age three.³⁷⁰

There is also a special service, referred to as occasional childminding, where preschool teachers or contractors with at least secondary education or five years experience in education may provide ECEC in the child's own home. Parents pay the entirety of this service.³⁷¹

→ In general, however, only childcare but not educational programmes may be provided by childminders.

³⁶⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁶⁹ 'European Commission, 'Slovenia,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

³⁷⁰ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁷¹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

Under the Preschool Institutions Act (2008) childminders may register under the Ministry of Education and Sport if they meet particular requirements; the Act also instituted minimum standards for unregistered childminders who care for children without a preschool place or whose parents prefer such care. The number of registered childminders has been increasing; in September 2012 there were 177.³⁷²

Box 7.6: Summary of types of services³⁷³

Preschool (*vrtec*)
 Independent preschool (*samostojni vrtec*)
 Preschool units attached to basic schools³⁷⁴ (*vrtec pri osnovni šoli*)
 Education-based childminder (*vzgojno-varstvena družina*)³⁷⁵
 Childminder
 Occasional childminder (*občasno varstvo na domu*)
 Registered childminder (*registriran varuh predšolskih otrok*)
 Out-of-school services

7.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

→ ECEC services in Slovenia are predominantly publicly provided. Only 3.1% of children were enrolled in private preschool centres in 2011-2012.³⁷⁶

In 2011-2012 there were 922 preschools, 95% of which were public.³⁷⁷ Public preschools are established and financed by municipalities, who may operate an independent centre or one which is attached to a primary school. Since 1991, private preschools have been allowed to operate, either with or without a 'concession' from the municipality. Concessions are only granted if the municipality perceives a need for more preschool education.

With a concession, private preschools are considered to be providing a public service and must have the same curriculum as a public preschool (although some are allowed to implement special pedagogical programmes such as Montessori if they receive a positive recommendation from the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education).³⁷⁸

³⁷² Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁷³ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁷⁴ This is the official Slovenian translation; personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁷⁵ Education-based childminder is defined as being a preschool type of services, as provision falls under the same national curriculum as preschools. The childminder must meet the same conditions as the preschool teacher or assistant in preschool. The only difference is the place or the setting of the provision. In the case of the childminder it is carried out at their home; personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁷⁶ Celebic, T., 'Preschool education in Slovenia and its international comparison with the EU countries.' *IMAD Working Paper Series* No. 4, Vol. 21, 2012. (English summary)

³⁷⁷ SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

³⁷⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

The number of private preschools has increased – there were 18 in 2006/2007 and 42 in 2011-2012.³⁷⁹ However, private provision remains underdeveloped due to a tradition of public provision under socialism and continuing prohibitive regulation. Most private centres receive some public funding.³⁸⁰

Table 7.1: Number and % of public and private preschools, 2011-12

Public preschool	880 (95%)
Private preschool	42 (5%)
Total	992

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

7.7.4 Financing and costs

→ The ECEC system is funded partly through the municipality budget and partly through parental contributions.

→ In 2009 expenditure on preschool education was 0.71% of GDP (0.56% public expenditure and 0.15% private expenditure). The majority of funding is spent on employee compensation (67.1% in 2009).³⁸¹

Local municipalities are the main funders and providers of preschool services and are responsible for ensuring adequate places for all children. If there are insufficient places, the procedure for municipalities to either provide additional places or grant a concession to a private provider must begin within 30 days of the parent's request. Private providers receive 85% of the per-child funding a municipality allocates to public preschool institutions for salaries and teaching resources.³⁸²

Parents are entitled to choose which preschool unit attached to a basic school their child attends.³⁸³

Municipalities determine the level of fees parents pay for public provision through a variety of factors - the cost of the programme (education, care and nutrition costs), national regulations on pricing, and family income in comparison with the national average.³⁸⁴

Since 2000, parents are required to pay no more than 80% and no less than 10% of costs, though families with low incomes or who face other disadvantages may be exempt from paying, receive further subsidies, or have priority access to services.³⁸⁵ Under the Public Finance Balance Act (passed in June 2012), for their second child, parents pay 30% of the childcare cost (determined on the basis of family income and

³⁷⁹ SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

³⁸⁰ Celebic, 2012.

³⁸¹ Celebic, 2012.

³⁸² Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁸³ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

³⁸⁴ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁸⁵ Children in Scotland, 2011.

property), while the state pays 70%. The third and any further children who attend preschool simultaneously are exempt from payment.³⁸⁶

→ In 2011, the average monthly cost for a preschool (full-day) place for a child age one to two years was €456.80 (£367) and €340.30 (£273) for those age three to six years, the difference in costs due to different child:staff ratios for the two age groups.³⁸⁷

The average monthly parental payment for preschool services was €146.40 (£118) and €109.07 (£88) respectively, or about 32% of the total cost. However, this varies across preschools.³⁸⁸

The average yearly cost of before-school care is €473 (£380) per pupil, which is provided only for a maximum of two hours per day before class. It is provided to parents free of charge.³⁸⁹

The average yearly cost of after-school care, which is only for pupils from 1st-5th grade, is €1125 (£903) per pupil. It is provided to parents free of charge.³⁹⁰

→ OECD data from 2008 suggests that a couple who earn the average wage would pay 14% of their household income, after benefits, for ECEC.³⁹¹

For special services, such as out-of-school services or the delivery of the preschool programme in a childminding setting, parents pay full fees.³⁹²

7.8 Access levels and patterns of use

→ More than 81,000 children, or 77.6% of all preschool age children, attend preschool education. More than 90% of four and five year olds attend preschool, as do the majority of two and three year olds. 42% of one year olds are also enrolled.

Children are registered for public preschool centres on the basis of an application procedure. Although municipalities are supposed to ensure access to preschool education to all children, it is not a guarantee.

Due to an increased birth rate and the introduction of free places for subsequent children, demand has increased substantially and the number of children who have been denied a place has increased since 2000. Recent reforms passed under the Public Finance Balance Act were intended to address these issues.

Children with additional needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds have priority access to preschool education.³⁹³

³⁸⁶ Personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, SMESCS, October 2012.

³⁸⁷ Celebic, 2012.

³⁸⁸ Celebic, 2012.

³⁸⁹ Basic Education Division, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

³⁹⁰ Basic Education Division, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport.

³⁹¹ OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

³⁹² Moss and Bennett, 2010.

Special provisions are also made for ethnic minority children and those who speak other languages (e.g. classes for Roma children may have a more favourable child:staff ratio).³⁹⁴

Table 7.2: Preschool enrolment rate by age, 2011-12

1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years and up	Total (%)
42.3	69.1	89.0	91.5	95.8	5.8	77.6

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

The number of children enrolled in preschool has been increasing. Since 2010/2011 the overall number of children enrolled increased by 6.9%, with an increase of 8% for children age three and up and an increase of 4.6% for those under three years.³⁹⁵

→ Almost all children (97.7%) enrolled in preschool attend all-day programmes.³⁹⁶ Full-day programmes are usually between six to nine hours per day.³⁹⁷

In 2010, of those children who were enrolled, on average children below three years spent 36.4 hours per week in preschool, while children age three to six years spent 34.9.³⁹⁸

→ During the school year 2008/2009 two thirds of school children in primary 1 to 5 attended after school classes.³⁹⁹

This number has increased over the last ten years due to trends in parents' longer working hours. In 1997 22% of children attending 1st to 5th grade were included in after-school classes while in 2007 the share was 64.8%. In 2007, 2,007 teachers took care of children in after-school classes.⁴⁰⁰

→ Informal care is unusual for children age three to school-start but common for the youngest age cohort. Over half of one year olds are cared for by their parents, relatives or in other informal care arrangements, whereas less than one in three of two year olds and one in ten of three year olds are in informal care arrangements.⁴⁰¹

³⁹³ Celebic, 2012.

³⁹⁴ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

³⁹⁵ SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

³⁹⁶ Celebic 2012, data from school year 2011/2012.

³⁹⁷ Eurydice, *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2009.

³⁹⁸ EU-SILC data for 2010. Eurostat.

³⁹⁹ SORS, Children's week, special release, 2008/2009.

⁴⁰⁰ SORS, Children's week, special release, 2008/2009.

⁴⁰¹ SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012; see also OECD Family Database, 2011. Neither the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport nor the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs were able to provide additional information on informal care use.

7.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

7.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

→ Regulations have recently been tightened with a view to increasing quality: the maximum number of children per adult has been reduced and minimum qualification requirements have been raised.

→ On average there are 8.2 children per preschool teacher and assistant. The average is 6.3 for those under three and 9.3 for those three to six.⁴⁰²

Regulation of ECEC falls under the Preschool Institutions Act. Private centres with a concession must meet the same requirements and follow the same curriculum as the public centres.

Special pedagogical preschools (e.g. Montessori) do not have to meet the same regulations, other than spatial requirements.

Private centres without concession agreements must meet regulations such as staff and equipment requirements and must receive a positive recommendation from the Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for General Education in order to operate.

Childminders can register under the Ministry of Education and Sport if they meet housing standards, do not have a criminal record, have a preschool qualification or at least secondary education, and care for no more than six children.⁴⁰³

→ The National Curriculum for Preschool Education Institutions, adopted in 1999, has also been revised to provide a more individualised approach.⁴⁰⁴

Teachers have autonomy in selecting content/methods from the national curriculum which does not specify knowledge levels/skills that must be acquired at particular developmental stages.

Ongoing evaluation is not formalised: teachers observe children's progress and report to parents orally.⁴⁰⁵

Compliance with regulations is assessed by the Inspectorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Education and Sport, which performs periodic inspections every 5th year, as a rule, as well as when issues arise. Individual preschools are also responsible for quality assessment through self-evaluation.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

⁴⁰³ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁰⁴ Eurydice, 'Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities,' Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2009.

⁴⁰⁵ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁰⁶ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

7.9.2 Workforce qualification

→ Each preschool class is instructed by a teacher and an assistant. Preschools are managed by a head teacher who is appointed by the Preschool Institution Council.

In 2011-2012 there were 10,200 preschool staff: 4,881 teachers and 5,317 assistants. The vast majority are women; about 2% are men.⁴⁰⁷

In response to the increased number of children attending preschool, the overall number of staff has been increasing, including both teaching staff without the relevant education as well as those with tertiary education.⁴⁰⁸

→ All preschool teachers must have at least three years of higher education in pre-primary education or a four-year university degree in another field with specialisation in pre-primary education.⁴⁰⁹

Head teachers must also complete a program of National School for Leadership in Education (over 144 hours of training). Assistants must have a vocational ECEC qualification from a four-year upper secondary education programme.

Large institutions may also include specialised staff (such as psychologists, counsellors) who usually have degrees in relevant subjects.

Table 7.3: Workforce qualifications and training

	Pre-service education	Qualifications
Preschool Teacher	At least 3 years tertiary	At least 3 years of higher education in preschool education or 4-year university degree + specialisation in early education
Preschool Assistant	At least upper secondary vocational level	Secondary vocational 4-year level with preschool qualification or general secondary 4-year level with specialisation in early education
Childminders	At least upper secondary vocational level	Upper secondary vocational or general level + vocational standard (it includes the following elements: name and code of the vocation, level of difficulty, vocational competences, areas of work, key tasks, knowledge and skills) ⁴¹⁰

Source: Moss & Bennett, 2010.

96% of teaching staff in preschools work full-time; working conditions are determined by national regulations (negotiated by representative trade unions and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture & Sport).

⁴⁰⁷ SORS, *Kindergartens, Slovenia, school year 2011/12 – final data*, 2012.

⁴⁰⁸ Celebic, 2012.

⁴⁰⁹ Children in Scotland, 2011.

⁴¹⁰ During a transitional period from 2008-2013 secondary vocational level (3 years) is sufficient for childminders; personal communication from Nada Pozar Matijasic, Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, 1 October 2012.

Although ECEC settings have been integrated with the education system, preschool teachers continue to have a lower level of education and somewhat lower pay compared with school teachers.⁴¹¹ Preschool teachers earn on average 3.28 times the minimum wage, while primary school teachers earn 3.4 times the minimum wage; assistants earn around twice the minimum wage.⁴¹²

7.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy⁴¹³

- 1958 General Law on Education placed day care centres under the responsibility of the Secretariat for Family and Social Protection (Slovenian Community of Childcare)
- 1960s Separate services for under-threes and over-threes began to give way to age-integrated centres
- 1970s/1980s
Expansion in the system of early childhood services
- 1971 First law on ECEC for age-integrated centres
- 1975 Vocational training for preschool nurses introduced
- 1979 *Programme for preschool education and care* - first national document about working with children across the early childhood period (eight months to seven years)
- 1980 *Law on preschool education and care* recognised preschool centres as a part of the overall education system
- 1981 Pre-primary education in the year before compulsory schooling (then set at age seven) became compulsory
- 1980s Preschools established and financed by municipalities, who received funding from the Community for Education and the Community of Childcare
- 1980 Law on preschool education and care passed – introduced obligatory year of school preparation for children age six to seven years
- 1981 *Educational Basic School Preparatory Programme* for Preschool Children
- 1984 Programme of higher education introduced for preschool teachers
- 1990 Colloquium –*Preschool care and education in the system of a wider social care for the child* – decision to continue integration of preschool services given ongoing process of development from infancy to school-age

⁴¹¹ Kaga et al., 2010.

⁴¹² OECD, *Starting Strong III – A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD, Paris, 2012.

⁴¹³ Moss and Bennett, 2010; European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011; Kaga et al. 2010.

- 1992 Overall ECEC placed under the Ministry of Education and Sport; inspection of services (previously a local responsibility) transferred to Inspectorate of Education and Sport
- 1996 *White Paper on Education; Kindergarten/Preschool Act* - educational reform changes compulsory school age from 7 to 6 and requires preschools to be available to all children, responsibility of municipalities to ensure provision; Regulations on Payments of the Parents for the Preschool Programmes introduced means-tested parental fee scale
- 1999 Introduction of national ECEC curriculum
- 2008 Preschool Institutions Act – introduced parental payment exemptions for enrolment of more than one child

7.11 Conclusion

Slovenia has a universal and integrated framework for the provision of early education and care, with full-day mostly public provision of services for all children age one to school age.

The employment rates of mothers are very high in Slovenia and this – combined with trends of longer working days, increased birth rates, and free ECEC provision for subsequent children – has led to a substantial increase in demand in recent years and bottlenecks in supply.

Increased strain on the supply of public preschool has led to debate about reforms. There is demand for state investment in building new preschool institutions or increasing capacity in existing institutions.

Increased public expenditure (including the use of EU structural funds) is also on the agenda in order to assist municipalities with increased provision of places. There is also some debate about unifying the payment system across municipalities as well as diversifying programmes by offering alternative curricula and/or shorter programmes.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁴ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

8 COUNTRY REPORT: FRANCE

8.1 Key findings

- France has a universal and yet fragmented system of ECEC displaying a complex combination of subsidised centre-based and home-based arrangements.
- The French family benefit system is complex and includes a wide range of components.
- 0.63% of GDP is spent on pre-primary education⁴¹⁵ and 0.4% is spent on childcare.⁴¹⁶
- Both parents can take parental leave until the child is three years old.
- ECEC in France is split by age group, with a universal state system of early education for children between three to six years (when compulsory schooling begins), and a variety of childcare services for children under three years.
- 85% of early education for children between three to six years (*école maternelles*) is provided directly by the state, with the remainder mostly provided by non-profit organisations, largely Catholic, which are contracted and subsidised by the state.
- *École maternelles* are publicly funded and provided free of charge to parents (other than meals, which are subsidised for families in need).
- Almost all children attend full-day preschool education from the age of three (between 97-100% depending on the local area) although it is not compulsory. 48.7% of under-threes attended some form of formal ECEC.
- Parents pay an estimated 27% of the costs of centre-based childcare. OECD data from 2008 estimates that after benefits, childcare costs take up 10% of the average family's income.
- ECEC settings are monitored through regular inspection. The national agency *Protection maternelle et infantile* (or PMI) inspects childcare services and education inspectors are responsible for monitoring preschools.
- Informal care is common in France, particularly for the under-threes.

⁴¹⁵ Data from 2008. OECD, *OECD Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁴¹⁶ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

8.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ France has a universal and yet fragmented system of ECEC displaying a complex combination of subsidised centre-based and home-based arrangements.

The underlying principle of ECEC in France is that the system should provide equal access for all children to all public ECEC services, irrespective of social or economic background.

The French ECEC system has a long history that dates back to the 19th century, when in light of low fertility rates and European wars, the notion developed that the State had a responsibility to protect maternity, childhood and women's capacity to work outside the home.⁴¹⁷ The development of ECEC was thus strongly embedded in Republican ideals: providing good pedagogical environments for children while their mothers worked, the State also socialised children into French citizens.

Already in 1881, with the adoption of the school laws, nursery schools (*école maternelle*) attained a strong educational focus, and in 1887 the first French preschool curriculum was adopted.⁴¹⁸ In the first decades of the 20th century, the workforce in *école maternelles* received the status of teachers.

The expansion of formal ECEC in France took place in the post-WWII decades. In particular, in the 1970s (linked to strong labour shortage) the French government introduced publicly-funded day care centres (*crèches*). At the same time, childminders were allowed to register so that parents could take advantage of the generous state subsidies existing for the other forms of public ECEC.⁴¹⁹

→ While there is a strong sense of public responsibility for all forms of formal ECEC, there is a split system with *école maternelles* for three to five year olds under the auspice of the Ministry of Education and other forms of childcare, particularly for the under-threes, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

8.3 Socio-economic context

The French economy is dominated by services, with about 77% of the active population employed in this sector.⁴²⁰ France has a GDP per capita at 107% of the EU-27 average.⁴²¹

France has a population of 65.4 million⁴²² with about 103 people per square kilometre.⁴²³ The total fertility rate is 1.99.⁴²⁴ 11.5 births occur for every 1000 women

⁴¹⁷ Fagnani, J., 'Equal access to quality care: Lessons from France on providing high quality and affordable childcare and early education.' In L. Gambaro, K. Stewart and J. Waldfogel (eds.) *Equal Access to Childcare: Providing Quality Early Education and Childcare to Disadvantaged Families*, Bristol: Policy Press, forthcoming.

⁴¹⁸ Fagnani, J., (forthcoming).

⁴¹⁹ Fagnani, J., (forthcoming).

⁴²⁰ European Commission, 'France,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

⁴²¹ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

⁴²² Data from 2012. Eurostat.

age 15-19⁴²⁵ and the mean age of mothers at first birth is 28.6.⁴²⁶ 18.3% of the population is under 15 years of age⁴²⁷ and 12% of children live in sole parent households.⁴²⁸

Box 8.1: Summary of population statistics⁴²⁹

Total fertility rate: 1.99
 Teenage pregnancies: 11.5 per 1000
 Mean age of mothers at first birth: 28.6
 Child population: 18.3%
 Children in lone parent households: 12%

8.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 69.1% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 9.7% for those age 15-74. The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 73.8% and for women 64.6%.⁴³⁰ Part-time work is more common for women than men: 5.9% of employed men work part-time versus 22.1% of employed women.⁴³¹

75.2% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 78.6% of men. 65.4% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed, compared to 89.4% of fathers. A little over 1/3 of mothers of children age eleven and under work part-time, compared to about 4-5% of similar fathers.⁴³²

⁴²³ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

⁴²⁴ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴²⁵ Data from 2008. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴²⁶ Data from 2006. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴²⁷ Data from 2010. Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: France,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁴²⁸ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Country profile: France,' *Children in Scotland, Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010, p.23.

⁴²⁹ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁴³⁰ Eurostat.

⁴³¹ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴³² Eurostat.

Box 8.2: Summary of employment statistics

Total employment rate: 69.1%
Total unemployment rate: 9.7%
Women's employment rate: 64.6%
Men's employment rate: 73.8%
Mothers' employment rate: 65.4%
Fathers' employment rate: 89.4%
Employed men working part-time: 5.9%
Employed women working part-time: 22.1%

8.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children⁴³³

Overall government expenditure takes up 56.2% of GDP in France.⁴³⁴ Public expenditure on social protection is almost 33.1% of GDP⁴³⁵ with 3.71% of GDP specifically directed toward families and children.⁴³⁶

→ 0.63% of GDP is spent on pre-primary education⁴³⁷ and 0.4% is spent on childcare.⁴³⁸

The ratio of income inequality between the top 20% and bottom 20% is 4.5,⁴³⁹ while the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is 17.9%.⁴⁴⁰ Income tax on the average worker made up 49.3% of labour cost in 2010.⁴⁴¹

Box 8.3: Summary of public expenditure⁴⁴²

Total public expenditure: 56.2% of GDP
On social protection: 33.1% of GDP
On families and children: 3.71% of GDP
On preschool education: 0.63% of GDP

⁴³³ Unless otherwise noted the following information is from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for France available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do?lang=en

⁴³⁴ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: France,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁴³⁵ Data from 2009. Eurostat.

⁴³⁶ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴³⁷ Data from 2008. OECD, *OECD Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁴³⁸ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁴³⁹ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

⁴⁴⁰ Share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income) after social transfers. EU-SILC 2010.

⁴⁴¹ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: France,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁴⁴² These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

The French social security system consists of a general scheme plus four other specialist components for particular groups (of employees, agricultural workers, self-employed and the unemployed). The general scheme itself has four branches:

- sickness, maternity, invalidity and death
- accidents at work and occupational diseases
- old age pension
- family

The social security system is financed from national insurance contributions paid by employers and employees and from general tax revenue. Social security contributions are calculated as a certain percentage of earnings. Supplementary collective schemes also exist, both compulsory and voluntary in nature. These schemes are specific to professions (companies or sectors), and they mainly cover old age pension, sickness or invalidity insurance. Individuals may also take out private insurance to supplement these schemes.

→ The French family benefit system is complex and includes a wide range of components.

These are detailed below.

Family allowance (childrearing benefit) is paid for families with responsibility for more than one child. It is a universal, non-means tested scheme financed by contributions from employers, from the self-employed and from a portion of the Generalised Social Contribution (contribution sociale généralisée, CSG). It can be paid until the child reaches 20 years of age as long as the child's income does not exceed 55% of the minimum wage.

The amount paid per month varies with the number of children:

- two children: €126.41 (£101)
- three children: €288.38 (£231)
- four children: €450.35 (£362)
- five children: €612.32 (£492)
- six children: €774.29 (£621.52)
- each subsequent child: €161.97 (£130)

Infant Welcome Benefit is paid in order to welcome, maintain and help with bringing up young children. It is paid to all families with at least one child under the age of three. It consists of two parts:

- grant for birth or adoption and the basic allowance
- complement for child care choice

The Birth or Adoption Grant of the Infant Welcome Benefit is €907.60 (£732) granted monthly from the seventh month of pregnancy for every unborn child or €1,815.21 (£1,464) for the adoption of a child less than 20 years of age. It is subject to a means test. The Basic Allowance of the Infant Welcome Benefit is €181.52 (£146) granted monthly as of the first child from the month of birth until the month preceding his/her third birthday, or from the month of adoption for a period of three years, but not beyond the age of 20.

The Complement for Child Care Choice of the Infant Welcome Benefit is a partial payment of care costs for children younger than six. The remuneration of a person taking care of a child under the age of three (reduction of 50% for a child between three and six) is financed partially and varies according to household income. Social contributions are entirely financed when hiring an agreed maternal assistant or financed at a 50% rate (within a ceiling) when hiring a person taking care of a child at home (between €169.57/£136 and €448.25/£360 per month for a child from birth to three years of age).

The Daily Allowance for Parent Presence is granted to any person taking care of a child, younger than 20, who has a sickness or a serious disability that requires a sustained presence. 310 days are credited, to be taken during a period of three years according to the child's need for care (€41.99/£34 per day). This increases to €49.89 (£40) if the person is solely taking care of the child. If the family income is lower than a certain level, an additional amount can be paid when further costs resulting from the disablement or sickness are higher than €105.30 (£85) per month.

The Active Solidarity Income is a minimum income provided for single parents regardless of whether they are capable of working.

The maintenance allowance, based on income, is provided for children who are not acknowledged by either parent or whose father or mother do not fulfil the obligation to pay maintenance. The partial rate is €88.88 (£72) per month and the full-rate is €118.51 (£96) per month.

The New School Year Allowance is provided for children age six to 18. It is a one-off means-tested payment, the amount of which depends on the age of the child:

- six to ten years: €286.40 (£230)
- eleven to 14 years: €302.17 (£243)
- 15 to 18 years: €312.67 (£251)

A means-tested family supplement of €164.53 (£132) is provided for families with at least three children over three years and under 21 years.

A housing allowance is also provided for those receiving one of the various forms of family allowances. The allowance is calculated taking into account the expenses for rent (within the upper limit), the family's situation, and the beneficiary's resources. It can be increased for those with low incomes.

8.6 Leave policies for families with small children⁴⁴³

8.6.1 Structure

Leave in France is structured into maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave. Sixteen weeks maternity leave is possible, with at least three weeks to be

⁴⁴³ This section draws heavily from the work of Fagnani, J. and Boyer, D., 'France.' In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies*, 2012 International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012.

taken before the birth. Paternity leave is available for eleven working days and must be taken within the four months following the birth.

→ Both parents can take parental leave until the child is three years old.

8.6.2 Payment and funding

Maternity and paternity leave is paid at 100% of earnings, up to a ceiling of €3,031 (£2,433) a month. However, in the public sector there is no ceiling, and some employers also pay in full. Maternity and paternity pay is funded from the health insurance scheme.

Parental leave is not paid as such, but all eligible families have recourse to a childcare allowance of €566.01 (£454) per month, which is linked into parental leave provision. For parents with only one child, this is paid for the six months after the end of maternity leave. In other families, it is paid until the child reaches three years of age. If the parent works part-time, then the benefit is reduced. Large families (with at least three children) are eligible for a flat rate payment of €801.39 (£643) per month for the duration of a year, paid on condition that one parent stops working. The childcare allowances are funded by employers' contributions to the family branch of Social Security, which amount to 5.4% of total wages paid to their employees.

8.6.3 Role of employer

All employees are eligible (as are self-employed workers) for maternity and paternity leave. Employers are often more generous than the statutory entitlements. All employees are eligible for parental leave if they have worked at least one year for their employer before the birth of a child. Eligibility for the childcare allowance becomes more restrictive the fewer children a parent has. For the first child, to be eligible for the childcare allowance, an employee must have been continuously employed for two years preceding the birth.

Employers can refuse to let parents work part-time if they can justify this on business grounds, but this does not apply to the public sector, where employees are entitled to work part-time for family reasons.

8.6.4 Uptake of leave

Almost all mothers take up maternity leave, but it is not compulsory. Women in higher status employment take less leave. Around two-thirds of eligible fathers took paternity leave in 2012. There are few statistics on the uptake of parental leave as employers are not required to provide such information. However, research suggests that mothers make up 98-99% of parents taking leave.

8.7 National framework of ECEC

→ ECEC in France is split by age group, with a universal state system of early education for children between three-six years (when compulsory schooling begins), and a variety of childcare services for children under three years.

Part of the national education system, preschool education is available to all children from the age of three years (or two years if there are available places) and is fully funded and organised by the state. Although this schooling is not compulsory, most children of the appropriate age do attend.⁴⁴⁴

8.7.1 Governance

Children's ECEC services are governed by different public bodies, depending on age group. Early education for children age three to six is part of the national education system and falls under the Ministry of Education. The Department of National Education, Youth and Community Life oversees the school system. Traditionally, the central French state has played a major role in the education system, setting the curriculum and directing staff recruitment and remuneration.⁴⁴⁵ Chief Education officers, *Académie* Directors and school heads oversee the implementation of national education policy at the local level.⁴⁴⁶

Local authorities have played a greater role since decentralisation in the 1980s, and are responsible for day-to-day provision, the physical environment and materials used in schools.⁴⁴⁷ The commune (municipality) also provides teaching assistants with a vocational early childhood certificate.⁴⁴⁸

Childcare services for children aged zero to three fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity and the Ministry of Health, Family and Disabled Persons. The Directorate of Social Affairs is the overall administrative unit responsible for non-school ECEC. A sub-ministry focusing on youth affairs is partially responsible for overseeing out-of-school services for children under 12 years.

Childcare is partly financed by the National Family Allowance Fund (*Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales* - CNAF), a public agency responsible for family policy, and the decentralised CAFs, (or *Caisses des Allocations Familiales*) which work with municipalities and non-profit organisations to develop ECEC at the local level.⁴⁴⁹

8.7.2 Types of services

Nursery schools, or *écoles maternelles*, take children from three to six years of age, although two year olds may be admitted if there are places available.⁴⁵⁰ These facilities form part of the education system and are essentially schools for pre-compulsory school age children, with similar instruction methods and large class sizes.⁴⁵¹ They operate during the official school year between September and July,

⁴⁴⁴ European Commission, 'France,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

⁴⁴⁵ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011; Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁴⁶ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁴⁷ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁴⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁴⁹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁵⁰ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁵¹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

with 24 hours of education per week – usually as four six-hour days (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday).⁴⁵²

Leisure time centres operate out-of-school care for children outside of school hours.

Crèches take children from the age of three months to three years providing centre-care on a permanent basis. *Crèches* may be run by municipalities, non-profits or parent cooperatives.

Commercial centre-based care is referred to as *jardins d'enfants*. These take children from the age of two to six.

In addition, there are centres which provide part-time or occasional care called *haltes garderies*. Some children also receive care from licensed childminders, or *assistantes maternelle*.

Since 2007, there also exist so-called 'multi-access centres' (*L'établissement multi-accueil*), that offer parents a variety of childcare options: occasional, collective or family-based (with childminders). In recent years, the number of these multi-access centres has increased, partly due to the conversion of other ECEC forms into these centres. Today six out of ten places in collective ECEC are offered in such a 'multi-access centre'.⁴⁵³

The different types of collective childcare centres are usually referred to as 'collective childcare settings' (*L'établissements d'accueil des jeunes enfants, EAJE*).

⁴⁵² 'European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁵³ Borderies, F., 'L'offre d'accueil des enfants de moins de trois ans en 2010', *études et résultats*, no. 803, juin 2012.

Box 8.4: Types of services⁴⁵⁴

Nursery school (école maternelle): pre-primary education for children age three-six (some two year olds); part of the state education system

Centre-based care:

- *crèches*: centres receiving children on a permanent basis
- *crèches collectives*: run by municipalities, departments or non-profit organisations
- *crèches parentales*: run by parent cooperatives
- *crèche d'entreprise*: employer crèches, mostly in the public sector and hospitals
- *centres multi-accueil*: offers full-time, part-time and emergency places
- *haltes garderies*: centres providing part-time and occasional care; operated by municipalities and non-profit providers; often for non-working parents or for parents who work non-standard hours
- *jardins d'enfants*: commercial centres for two to six year olds

Family day care, or childminding (assistantes maternelles):

- *Licensed childminders (assistantes maternelles agréées)*: care for one to three children in the provider's home
- *Childminding networks (crèche familiale)*: networks for individual childminders to provide collective care

In-home caregivers (garde à domicile): care in the child's home; not subject to the same regulations as childminders

Out of school services (centre de loisirs sans hébergement): leisure time centres for children outside of school hours and on Wednesday afternoons

8.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

→ 85% of early education (*école maternelles*) is provided directly by the state, with the remainder mostly provided by non-profit organisations, largely Catholic, which are contracted and subsidised by the state.

→ 36% of *crèches* and 12% of 'multi-access centres' are run privately, mostly by non-profit organisations or the CAF.⁴⁵⁵

Since 2003, the provision of childcare is open to for-profit providers in line with the government's attempt to expand the availability of ECEC. There have also been initiatives of employers setting up workplace *crèches*; today there are 500 such *crèches* in France representing around 2.7% of places available in collective childcare.⁴⁵⁶

Local authorities in France do not have any legal obligation to provide childcare for children under three years, but they are encouraged to do so under the CNAF subsidy system. The proportion of ECEC delivered by non-profit organisations has increased over time, to more than 40%, and often includes both paid professionals

⁴⁵⁴ Moss and Bennett, 2010; European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁵⁵ Borderies, 2012.

⁴⁵⁶ Fagnani (forthcoming).

and volunteers from the community and parents.⁴⁵⁷ Crèches run by parent associations are highly subsidised and form part of the local childcare networks.⁴⁵⁸

Childcare for under-threes is dominated by childminders. Childminders in France are private individuals paid by parents (who receive tax benefits) but are considered to be providing a 'semi-public service' and are regulated accordingly.⁴⁵⁹

→ 53% of the out of school leisure centres are operated by non-profit associations, 42% by the local authority and 5% by businesses, the CAF or individuals.⁴⁶⁰

8.7.4 Financing and costs

→ Preschool education is publicly funded and provided free of charge to parents (other than meals, which are subsidised for families in need).

Childcare is partly financed by the national family allowance fund *Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales* (CNAF) and the decentralised *Caisses des Allocations Familiales* (CAFs).⁴⁶¹ CAFs distribute family allowances and subsidies for childcare.⁴⁶² The funding system for childcare is complicated, with several allowances to help parents pay for care.

→ Parents pay an estimated 27% of the costs of centre-based childcare.⁴⁶³ OECD data from 2008 estimates that after benefits, childcare costs take up 10% of the average family's income.⁴⁶⁴

In 2010 the total amount of funding to the ECEC system by various public actors was €27 billion (£21.7bn). This sum was almost equally divided between ECEC for children below the age of three and those age three to six. Of this €9.1 billion (£7.3bn) was directly allocated to the running costs of ECEC services for under-threes and €13.4 billion (£10.8bn) to services for three to six year olds respectively.⁴⁶⁵

This sum was split amongst public actors as follows:

- The branch of the *Famille de la Sécurité sociale*: €10.9 billions (£8.8bn)
- The 'collectivités territoriales': €7.9 billion (£6.3bn)
- Ministry of Education: €6.9 billion (£5.5bn)
- Tax administration: €1.3 billion⁴⁶⁶ (£1.04bn)

⁴⁵⁷ OECD, *OECD country note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in France*, OECD, Paris, 2004.

⁴⁵⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁵⁹ Borderies, 2012.

⁴⁶⁰ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁶¹ Fagnani, J., (forthcoming)

⁴⁶² OECD, *OECD country note: Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in France*, OECD, Paris, 2004.

⁴⁶³ OECD, *Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*, OECD, Paris, 2006.

⁴⁶⁴ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008. OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁴⁶⁵ Caisse nationale allocations familiales (CNAF): *L'accueil du jeune enfant en 2010. Données statistiques*. Observatoire national de la petite enfance, Paris.

⁴⁶⁶ CNAF, *L'accueil du jeune enfant en 2010*.

In addition public subsidies directly to parents to reduce ECEC costs amounted to €1.1 billion (£0.9bn) for under-threes and €13.7 billion (£11bn) for children age three to six.⁴⁶⁷

In 2009, the annual cost of a place in an *école maternelle* was calculated to be on average €5,374 (£4,314). The costs of a place in any of the other collective care facilities was €12,504 (£10,036.92); €7.76 (£6.23) per hour.⁴⁶⁸ The difference in costs stems from different opening hours (*écoles maternelles* close at 16.30 while *crèche* and other care centres usually are open until 18.00; *écoles maternelles* have school breaks, while the care services operate on an all-year basis; there are also differences in staff to child ratios).

Table 8.1: Annual cost of ECEC place in 2009

Nursery schools (<i>écoles maternelles</i>)	€5,374 (£4,314)
Collective childcare facilities (EAJE)	€12,504 (£10,037) (£6.23/hour)

8.8 Access levels and patterns of use

→ Almost all children attend full-day preschool education from the age of three, between 97-100% depending on the local area, although it is not compulsory.⁴⁶⁹

48.7% of under-threes attended some form of formal ECEC. For the under-threes, the most common form of formal ECEC is with a registered childminder (27%); followed by collective childcare facilities (EAJE) and nursery schools 19.8%.⁴⁷⁰

→ Informal care is common in France, particularly for the under-threes. Parental care is the most common for this age group, with a bit more than half being taken care of in the family home, usually by one parent (in practice mostly the mother).

Table 8.2: Main formal ECEC arrangements for under-3s

	% of all children under 3
Collective childcare facilities (EAJE)	14.7
Nursery schools (<i>écoles maternelles</i>)	5.1
Registered childminders	27
Nanny/day-care employee (publicly subsidised)	1.9
Informal care (by relatives, friends or others, and parents)	51.3

Source: CNAF, 2012

According to EU-SILC data, in 2010 47% of children attended for 30 or more hours per week. 43% of children under three years attended formal ECEC (excluding childminding); 26% attended for 30 or more hours per week. All children under

⁴⁶⁷ CNAF, *L'affueil du jeune enfant en 2010*.

⁴⁶⁸ CNAF, *L'affueil du jeune enfant en 2010*.

⁴⁶⁹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁷⁰ Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales (CNAF), *La politique petite enfance vue par les communes*, Paris, L'essentiel, no 121, 2012. Available at: http://www.caf.fr/sites/default/files/cnaf/Documents/Dser/essentiel/121-_cej.pdf

school age who received formal care spent roughly 30 hours per week in care, on average.

Other forms of care, such as childminding and informal care by relatives, are used less frequently by both under-threes and over-threes. Roughly 20% of preschool age children used this form of care. On average under-threes spent about 23 hours per week in care while over-threes spent about 15 hours per week.

About 46% of children under three are cared for by their parents only, but this is much less common for those over three, at about 4%.

Box 8.5: ECEC arrangements (2010)

Proportion of all children age 0-2 in ELCC arrangements:⁴⁷¹

Formal: 0 hours (58%), 1-29 hours (17%); 30 or more (26%)

Average hours per week: 30.4

Other: 0 hours (80%), 1-29 hours (13%); 30 or more (8%)

Average hours per week: 22.7

Parents: 46%

Proportion of all children age three to compulsory school age in ELCC arrangements:

Formal: 0 hours (6%), 1-29 hours (47%); 30 or more (47%)

Average hours per week: 29.4

Other: 0 hours (77%), 1-29 hours (20%); 30 or more (3%)

Average hours per week: 15.1

Parents only: 4%

Out-of-school leisure centres serve about 13% of children age three to six years on Wednesdays, after school, and during short vacations.⁴⁷²

It is common in France for parents to combine formal ECEC of their children with informal care arrangements.⁴⁷³ This may not always be due to preference but to the lack of available places. The public crèches are popular among parents, particularly dual earner parents with higher education levels, but demand currently outstrips availability. Despite the fact that formal ECEC in all its forms is highly publicly subsidised, parents with lower incomes often choose informal arrangements over formal ECEC due to cost factors.⁴⁷⁴

8.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

8.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

→ ECEC settings are monitored through regular inspection. The national agency *Protection maternelle et infantile* (or PMI) inspects childcare services and education inspectors are responsible for monitoring preschools.

⁴⁷¹ EU-SILC data from 2010, Eurostat. Formal arrangements: preschool/compulsory school, centre-based out-of-school care, day care centre; Other arrangements: childminder in child's or provider's home, other family members, friends/neighbours.

⁴⁷² Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁷³ Personal communication with Prof. Jean Fagnani, September 2012.

⁴⁷⁴ Fagnani (forthcoming).

The PMI is responsible for monitoring all ECEC services outside the school system. Settings are regulated for capacity and building requirements, child to staff ratios and group size as well as staff qualifications and parental involvement. Crèches are not required to follow a curriculum but they must set out social and educational goals for children. Other childcare settings must describe plans for their services and the care and well-being of children.⁴⁷⁵ In crèches, the maximum child to staff ratio is five children per adult for infants and eight per adult for toddlers. In *jardins d'enfants*, the ratio for children over three is 15 per adult. Childminders may take a maximum of four children.

Childminding regulations have increased professionalisation in the sector since 2000. All childminders are required to be licensed, although some remain unregulated. Childminders are approved by the Conseil Général of their local area for a period of three years and are trained by the PMI.⁴⁷⁶ Childminders are allowed to look after one to three children at once and must undertake a minimum of 120 hours of training.⁴⁷⁷ The PMI is obligated to support and train childminders.

Early education programmes are supervised by the *Inspecteurs de l'Education Nationale* (IEN). Education inspectors in charge of primary schools, including preschool education, evaluate teachers through observation and discussion every three to four years. All preschools follow the same national curriculum. The framework emphasises school-readiness, language and writing skills. At the end of the last year, teachers produce a report for each child which continues to the end of primary education. Class sizes are large, about 26 in 2007, which precludes a more play-based approach. Preschools do not have a maximum child to staff ratio but additional funding is available to reduce class sizes to no more than 25 children.⁴⁷⁸

8.9.2 Workforce qualifications

The ECEC workforce consists of teachers and assistants in the school system, including the *école maternelles*; and children's nurses, nursing assistants and educators in the centre-based services. In childcare settings such as crèches and *haltes-garderies*, children's nurses have been predominant, but the proportion of child educators has increased.

Teachers at all levels of education in the public sector, including the *école maternelle*, belong to the State civil service. Since 2010/2011, all teachers, including pre-primary, are required to hold a Master's degree. Previously, only a Bachelor's degree was required.⁴⁷⁹ Teachers are trained for the needs of primary schools, rather than the specific needs of preschool age children.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁵ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁷⁶ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁷⁷ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁷⁸ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁷⁹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁴⁸⁰ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

Box 8.6: ECEC occupations⁴⁸¹

Children's nurses (*Puéricultrices*)
 Child educators (*Éducateurs de jeunes enfants*)
 Nursing assistants (*Auxiliaires de puériculture*)
 Teachers in the *école maternelle* (*Professeurs des écoles*)
 Child assistants (auxiliary staff in the *école maternelle*)

Qualifications for staff in other ECEC settings are relevant diplomas (e.g. nurse or educator). All public settings are required to have at least 50% of the staff qualified to the specified level (see table below). A further 25% of staff must have qualifications related to health, social work or leisure.⁴⁸²

Table 8.3: ECEC workforce qualifications

Type of provision	Staff title	Pre-service education required	Qualification level
Childminding	Assistante maternelle	120 hours training	Certificate
Crèche	Puéricultrice (child nurse)	Nurse or mid-wife diploma (Bacc. + 3) + 1 year specialisation	State diploma
	Éducateur de jeunes enfants (educator)	3 years in post Bacc. in special training centres	Tertiary university diploma B
	Auxiliary staff	A one-year formation with on-the-job training	Professional diploma level
École maternelle	Professeur des écoles (teacher)	3-year university degree + 2 years professional education, 2/3 of which will be a practicum and one-third tertiary level (training college) education	Masters degree
	ATSEM (child assistants)	Secondary vocational level certificate in early childhood studies	CAP Certificate

Source: Moss & Bennett, 2010.

8.10 Historical overview of ECEC policy⁴⁸³

1880s *École maternelles* included in the French educational system as part of French nation-building and language dissemination

1888 First preschool curriculum for *école maternelles*

⁴⁸¹ Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁸² Moss and Bennett, 2010.

⁴⁸³ Moss and Bennett, 2010.; Fagnani, J. and Boyer, D., 'France.' In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies 2012* International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012; Fagnani, J. and Math, A., 'France: Gender Equality a Pipe Dream?' In S. Kamerman and P. Moss (eds) *The Politics of Parental Leave Policies*, Policy Press: Bristol, 2009.

1909 Pregnant working women become entitled to eight weeks leave

1913 Low-income mothers receive maternity benefit

Post-1945:

Crèches, previously the responsibility of charitable organisations, became part of the state welfare system. Improved paid maternity leave

1977 Parental leave scheme introduced

1980-

1983 Responsibility for crèches was decentralised to the commune (municipality)

1985 Creation of the childrearing benefit

1986 Funding introduced for communes to found a greater diversity of services: crèches, as well as part-time services, childminding and childminding networks

1994 Family law increases childcare allowances and tax concessions

2000 Introduction of 'micro-crèches' (small groups of childminders working in the same residence); reform of regulation of crèches to increase flexibility

2001 Introduction of paternity leave

2004 Extra childrearing benefit (in the form of Infant Welcome benefit) – 'supplement for the freedom of choice to work or not'

8.11 Conclusion

ECEC provision in France is guided by the principle of universality in that the system should give access for all children irrespective of background. Accordingly, ECEC provision is strongly publicly subsidised with income-related fees, making ECEC available at relatively low cost for low-income families.

At the same time it is a split system that differentiates between preschools (*école maternelles*) for three to six year olds and childcare for the younger children. There is a great number of different types of childcare services and organisation and funding of this ECEC system is highly complex.

In recent years there has been a steadily growing demand for ECEC places for under-threes leading to bottlenecks in the supply. Proposals to meet demand have included government schemes to encourage women to work as childminders and discussion of loosening regulations on the minimum of qualified staff in crèches from 50% to 40% and increasing the maximum number of children per crèche by 20%. Equally there is debate on increasing the number of children a childminder can look after from three to four.

These trends have also led to debate about the quality of ECEC provision. Recent developments in ECEC policy include a requirement (as of the 2010/2011 school year) for teachers to gain a Master's degree before entering the profession. This includes teachers providing preschool education.⁴⁸⁴

Changing working patterns of parents with long and inflexible hours have also led to discussion of extending opening hours beyond ten hours a day to meet working parents' needs.

⁴⁸⁴ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

9 COUNTRY REPORT: NETHERLANDS⁴⁸⁵

9.1 Key Findings

- In the Netherlands, ECEC is not integrated across leave, childcare and early education. There is a split system with different ministries responsible for early education and for childcare.
- 2.84% of GDP is directed toward families and children. Approximately 0.38% of GDP is directed toward pre-primary education and 0.3% devoted to childcare.
- A high proportion of employed women work part-time (60.5%).
- Women are not allowed to work between four weeks before the expected date of delivery and six weeks after the actual date of delivery.
- Paternity leave can be taken by a male or female employee who is the partner of a woman giving birth or who acknowledges the child.
- In 2011, the responsibility for childcare was reallocated to the Department for Social Affairs and Employment, having for a while been the remit of the Department for Education, Culture and Science. The responsibility for early childhood education programmes remains with the education department.
- In 2011, the overall municipality budget for prevention and reduction of learning delays was €261 (£209.5) million.
- Formal childcare provision in the Netherlands is now a fully demand-led financing system.
- Childcare is largely deregulated, though 2012 saw some re-regulation following amendments to the 2005 Childcare Act.
- Since 2007, all employers are obliged to pay a percentage of their employees' salaries – of both those with and those without children – to the government to cover a part of the costs of childcare. In 2011 this was 0.34% of the total salary.
- The Netherlands does not employ a unitary regulatory regime. Inspections for early education services are separate from those for childcare services.

⁴⁸⁵ We gratefully acknowledge the advice and support from Monique de Koning, Dutch Ministry of Education, for this chapter.

9.2 Concepts and objectives guiding ECEC development

→ The Netherlands does not have an integrated system of ECEC. There is a split system with different ministries responsible for early education and for childcare.

The concepts and objectives guiding ECEC developments in the Netherlands changed profoundly in the course of the last decade and continue to be dynamic. There is no consensus on how ECEC should be organised, and as a consequence, a variety of programmes and methods can be found within the system.⁴⁸⁶

The introduction of the 2005 Childcare Act (amended in 2010 and 2012) reflected the prioritisation of childcare for the children of employed parents, whereas early learning had previously been the main early childhood policy focus. Thus, labour market rather than educational policy became the main driver of system change.

The Netherlands continues to have a split system of early education and care for children from birth to age five, which has been the compulsory school starting age since 1985. Playgroups, now professionally run and receiving substantial public funding, continue to play an important role in Dutch early years provision, especially for children from ethnic minority communities.

Since 2005, there has been a shift to a demand-driven childcare financing system and the introduction of market forces, with policy targeted at public-private partnerships.⁴⁸⁷ This has largely led to the disappearance of publicly provided childcare.

9.3 Socio-economic context

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy and a founding member of the European Union (1952). It is economically successful, with the second highest GDP per capita in the EU-27, at 131% of the EU-27 average.⁴⁸⁸

The Netherlands has a population of 16.7 million⁴⁸⁹ with about 492 people per square kilometre.⁴⁹⁰ The total fertility rate is 1.8.⁴⁹¹ 3.5 births occur for every 1000 women age below 20⁴⁹² and the mean age of mothers at first birth is 29.4.⁴⁹³ 417.6

⁴⁸⁶ Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, *Early childhood education and care policy in the Netherlands*, The Hague: Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2000.

⁴⁸⁷ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early childhood education and care*, OECD, Paris, 2006; Noailly, J., Visser, S. and Grout, P., *The Impact of Market Forces on the Provision of Childcare: Insights from the 2005 Childcare Act in the Netherlands*. CBP Memorandum 176. The Hague: CPB, 2007; Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, available at: www.cpb.nl/nl/; Plantenga, J., 'Local providers and loyal parents: competition and consumer choice in the Dutch childcare market.' In E. Lloyd and H. Penn (eds.) *Childcare markets – Can they deliver an equitable service?* Bristol: The Policy Press, 2012, p 63-77.

⁴⁸⁸ Data from 2011. Eurostat.

⁴⁸⁹ Data from 2012. Eurostat.

⁴⁹⁰ Data from 2012. Eurostat.

⁴⁹¹ Data for 2011. Statistical Office of the Netherlands (CBS), 2012.

⁴⁹² Data for 2011. CBS, 2012.

⁴⁹³ Data for 2011. CBS, 2012.

per 1000 live children born are to non-married mothers⁴⁹⁴ and around one in ten are born to a single mother⁴⁹⁵. 17.5% of the population is under 15 years of age⁴⁹⁶ and 9% of children live in sole parent households.⁴⁹⁷

Box 9.1: Summary of key population statistics⁴⁹⁸

Total fertility rate: 1.8

Teenage pregnancies (no. of births per 1000 women age below 20): 3.5

Mean age of mothers at first birth: 29.4

Child population: 17.5%

Children in lone parent households: 9%

9.4 Employment patterns

The overall employment rate for 2011 was 77% of those age 20-64; the unemployment rate was 4.4% for those age 15-74. The employment rate for men age 20-64 was 82.6% and for women 71.4%.

Part-time work is more common in the Netherlands than in most other countries, for both men and women, but it is especially common among women: 17.1% of employed men work part-time versus 60.5% of employed women.⁴⁹⁹

A high proportion of women's part-time employment is short part-time. In 2010, slightly over half of women working less than 30 hours per week only worked zero to 19 hours per week.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁴ Data for 2011. CBS, 2012.

⁴⁹⁵ Data for 2010. CBS, 2012.

⁴⁹⁶ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Netherlands,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁴⁹⁷ Moss, P. and Bennett, J., 'Netherlands.' Children in Scotland, *Working for inclusion: an overview of European Union early years services and their workforce*, 2010, p.23.

⁴⁹⁸ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁴⁹⁹ All part-time data from 2011. OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris, 2011. Available at: www.oecd.org/social/family/database

⁵⁰⁰ Data from 2010. OECD Family Database, 2011.

Box 9.2: Summary of employment statistics⁵⁰¹

Total employment rate: 77%
Total unemployment rate: 4.4%
Women's employment rate: 71.4%
Men's employment rate: 82.6%
Mothers' employment rate: 76.1%
Fathers' employment rate: 94.1%
Employed men working part-time: 17.1%
Employed women working part-time: 60.5%

83.8% of women age 20-49 without children were employed in 2011, compared to 85% of men. The gap between mothers' and fathers' employment is substantially wider. While 76.1% of mothers with a child below the age of six were employed, 94.1% of such fathers were employed.⁵⁰²

Encouraging maternal employment, as well as the transformation of part-time into full-time employment, has been a key driver for policy changes in the last decade, including the 2005 Childcare Act. Overall, the change in law seems to have had an impact on medium and highly educated women, whose participation increased. It seems to have had no impact on women with less education or on men.⁵⁰³

9.5 Welfare system and social support for families with children⁵⁰⁴

The Dutch social security system is comprised of national insurance, which includes family benefits, old-age insurance and medical care, and employees' insurance, which includes unemployment insurance and sick pay. It is financed through a system of employer and employee contributions and taxation.

Overall government expenditure takes up 51.2% of GDP.⁵⁰⁵ As of 2009, public expenditure on social protection made up 31.6% of GDP.⁵⁰⁶

→ 2.84% of GDP was specifically directed toward families and children.⁵⁰⁷ Approximately 0.38% of GDP was directed toward pre-primary education⁵⁰⁸ and 0.3% devoted to childcare.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰¹ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁵⁰² Eurostat, 2011.

⁵⁰³ CBS, *Ex post analyse effect kinderopvangtoeslag op arbeidsparticipatie*, The Hague: Centraal Plan Bureau, 2011.

⁵⁰⁴ The following material is extracted from the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) database, July 2011. Information for the Netherlands available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/SSRinEU/Your%20social%20security%20rights%20in%20Netherlands_en.pdf

⁵⁰⁵ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Netherlands,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁵⁰⁶ Data from 2009. Eurostat.

⁵⁰⁷ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

Box 9.3: Summary of public expenditure⁵¹⁰

Total public expenditure: 51.2% of GDP

On social protection: 31.6% of GDP

On families and children: 2.84% of GDP

On preschool education: 0.38% of GDP

The ratio of income inequality between the top 20% and bottom 20% is 3.7,⁵¹¹ while the at-risk-of-poverty rate for children is 13.7%.⁵¹² Income tax on the average worker made up 38.4% of labour cost in 2010.⁵¹³

There are various family benefits in the Netherlands. General child benefit is a tax financed universal scheme covering all residents for children up to 18 years of age.

There is a top up child-related allowance for households with a household income below a certain threshold. The basic amount per child is €92.85 (£75). Households with two children receive €104.42 (£84), and with three €108.27 (£87). Benefits are paid per quarter. Double amounts can be paid in circumstances where the child is not living at home.

A childcare allowance is paid for children cared for outside the home during parental working hours. The amount paid depends on: the composition of the household; the type of childcare; the level of the childcare expenses; and the income level of the parents. In 2012, the maximum benefit amount was €6.36 (£5.11) an hour for day nurseries and €5.93 (£4.76) an hour for out-of-school care.⁵¹⁴

9.6 Leave policies for families with small children⁵¹⁵

9.6.1 Structure

Leave in the Netherlands is structured into maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave.

Maternity leave lasts for 16 weeks, six weeks before birth and ten weeks after birth (with no time deducted if the birth is later than expected). Paternity leave is for two working days and can be taken within four weeks of the birth.

⁵⁰⁸ Data from 2008. OECD, *OECD Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

⁵⁰⁹ Data from 2007. OECD Family Database, 2011.

⁵¹⁰ These statistics are the most recent available at the time of writing, but may not represent the same year, which is indicated in the text above.

⁵¹¹ Data from 2010. Eurostat.

⁵¹² Share of persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income) after social transfers. EU-SILC 2010.

⁵¹³ Data from 2010. OECD, 'Country statistical profile: Netherlands,' *Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD*, 2011.

⁵¹⁴ CBS, *Kinderopvang in Kaart* ('Mapping Childcare'), The Hague: CPB, 2011, p. 23.

⁵¹⁵ This section draws heavily from the work of Groenendijk, H. and Keuzenkamp, S., 'The Netherlands.' In P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies 2012*, International Network on Leave Policies and Research, June 2012; and Plantenga, J. and Remery, C., 'The Netherlands: bridging labour and care.' In S. Kamerman and P. Moss (eds.) *The Politics of Parental Leave Policies*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2009.

→ Pregnant workers are not allowed to work between four weeks before the expected and six weeks after the actual date of delivery.

→ Paternity leave can be taken by a male or female employee who is the partner of a woman giving birth or who acknowledges the child.

The length of parental leave is calculated as 26 times the number of working hours per week per parent per child, to be taken up to the child's eighth birthday.

9.6.2 Payment and funding

Maternity payment is set at 100% of earnings up to a ceiling equivalent to the maximum daily payment for sickness benefit (€192.55/£155 per day). It is funded from a central unemployment fund, which is financed by employers contributing a percentage (4.15%) of employees' earnings.

Paternity leave is funded at 100% of earnings, with no ceiling on payments. It is paid by the employer. All parents taking parental leave (which must be taken part-time) are entitled to a tax reduction of €723 (£580) a month (i.e. half the statutory minimum wage a month in case of full-time leave) or €4.18 (£3.36) an hour for each hour of leave.

Box 9.4: Summary of payment for leave	
Maternity leave	100% of earnings up to a ceiling
Paternity leave	100% of earnings, no ceiling
Parental leave	Compensated via a tax reduction

9.6.3 Role of employers

All women employees are eligible for maternity leave. Self-employed women are entitled to a 16 week payment up to a maximum of 100% of the statutory minimum wage. Employers must contribute to a central fund, from which maternity is paid. Employers cover paternity leave (two days).

All employees who have completed one year's continuous employment with the present employer are eligible for part-time parental leave. With the agreement of the employer, leave can be taken in blocks of time, or over a shorter or longer period. Employers are permitted to deviate from the statutory entitlements by Collective Labour Agreements, which may lead to both more or less than the amounts specified above.

All employees with a year's continuous employment have the right to increase or decrease their working hours, though there are situations in which an employer can refuse to grant such a request. Other employment-related measures include possibilities for short-term care leave, emergency leave and long-term care leave.

9.6.4 Uptake of leave

As maternity leave is compulsory, take up will be close to 100%. Estimates from 2004 (most recent available data) are that 90% of eligible men took up some sort of leave, around 50% taking the statutory paternity leave, the others using holiday entitlement. Estimates from 2010 suggest that 43% of eligible women and 23% of eligible men took parental leave. As is common across countries, take up is higher among workers with higher levels of education and income.

A bill has been put forward [Law on modernising leave arrangements and working times] to change the Working Hours Adjustment Act to protect employees taking parental leave. The changes in the bill were meant to come into force per 1 July 2012, but as an effect of the fall of the cabinet and elections forthcoming in September 2012 at the time of writing, the bill has not yet been discussed. The bill includes: more flexibility in the uptake of parental leave and an extension of the entitlement to employees starting in a job.⁵¹⁶

Box 9.5: Summary of leave arrangements	
Maternity leave	16 weeks: 6 weeks before birth and 10 weeks after birth; 10 weeks of which are obligatory
Paternity leave	2 days
Parental leave	26 times the number of working hours per week per parent per child, to be taken up to the child's eighth birthday.

9.7 National framework of ECEC

→ In the Netherlands the ECEC system for children from birth to five is not unified, except at the level of early education between the ages of four and six delivered in the '*Basisschool*' (primary school). The compulsory school age is five.

9.7.1 Governance

Responsibility for early childhood services is shared among several government departments at central government level.

→ In 2011, the responsibility for centre-based childcare, family day care and playgroups was reallocated to the Department for Social Affairs and Employment, having for a while been the remit of the Department for Education, Culture and Science. The responsibility for early childhood education programmes remains with the education department.

Local authorities (municipalities) carry the responsibility for the development of preschool education for two and three year olds which is provided in play groups and

⁵¹⁶ Personal communication with Hanne Groenendijk, August 2012.

day nurseries, and the boards of primary schools carry the responsibility for the early education of four and five year olds within the first two years of primary schools.⁵¹⁷

Responsibility for playgroups until recently had remained for over 40 years with the Department for Health, Welfare and Sport. At a national level responsibility for policy and provision has traditionally been shared between local, provincial and national government.⁵¹⁸ The impact of the 2005 Childcare Act has been to prioritise the role of central government over the other two tiers of government. Legislative responsibilities remain with central government.

Children of unemployed parents and those whose development may be at risk because of language delay or other forms of disadvantage are catered for in playgroups and sometimes in childcare provision. In this and other forms of preschool provision they are offered a compensatory early education programme: 'voorschoolse educatie' at the discretion of local authorities. Since 2006, a similar compensatory programme, 'vroegschoolse educatie,' is also available for such children as part of the early education delivered in the first two years of 'Basisschool'. Here, school heads have overall responsibility for this form of provision.

In the past few years a harmonisation track has been put in place, which is aimed at the harmonisation of day nurseries and playgroups.⁵¹⁹ It was also recommended by the Education Board ('Onderwijsraad') to give primary schools the responsibility for the continuous learning line of providing preschool education for three year olds.⁵²⁰ At the moment there is a pilot project to explore the effects of transferring responsibility for preschool education provision for three year olds from institutions such as day nurseries, play schools and municipalities to primary schools. The project includes 30 primary schools.⁵²¹

9.7.2 Types of services

The early education and care system in the Netherlands is divided between early learning within and outside school, and care. All four year olds are entitled to one year of full-time early education, which is offered in the first form of primary education. There are several different forms of care and/or early education provision for children from birth to age four.

- Day nurseries ('kinderdagverblijf'): for children from six to eight weeks of age until their fourth birthday who might attend weekdays from 8.00 to 18.00.⁵²² These may be run as either private-for-profit or not-for-profit businesses and a

⁵¹⁷ 'National monitor pre- and early education,' p. 13. Letter to the House of Representatives, *Wetsvoorstel Ontwikkelingskansen door kwaliteit en educatie* [Parliamentary proposal on Development chances through quality and education], 19 December 2008.

⁵¹⁸ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early childhood education and care*, OECD, Paris, 2006, p. 387

⁵¹⁹ 'National monitor pre- and early education,' 2008, p. 13.

⁵²⁰ Letter by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences to the Chair of the House of Representatives (16 March 2012) *Primair Onderwijs* ('Primary Education'), p. 7.

⁵²¹ Letter by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences to the Chair of the House of Representatives (16 March 2012) *Primair Onderwijs* ('Primary Education'), p. 7.

⁵²² European Commission, 'Netherlands,' *Eurypedia – European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems*, 2011.

number are part of childcare company chains. None so far have been listed on the Dutch stock market.⁵²³ Parents can get part of the costs reimbursed via childcare subsidies and part from their employers.⁵²⁴ Unemployed parents are not subsidised to use such provision.

- Playgroups (*'peuterspeelzaal'*): for children age between two and four who can attend two mornings or afternoons a week. These institutions' registration and inspection are the responsibility of municipalities,⁵²⁵ and unless children are considered 'at risk', or disadvantaged in other ways, parents cannot get childcare tax credits to contribute to the cost of sending their children to such settings.⁵²⁶
- Out-of-school care (*'buitenschoolse opvang'*): for children from four to twelve years of age who are attending primary school. Since 2007, the school board is required by law to organise this type of childcare before and after school, on non-teaching days such as teacher training days and in school holidays (excluding public holidays), from 7.30 to 18.30.⁵²⁷
- Family day care with registered childminders (*'gastouderopvang'*): for children from six weeks to twelve years of age. Flexible childcare in a family setting, usually in the childminder's home, is also offered.⁵²⁸ To liaise between parents seeking family day care and family day-carers themselves, there exist childminding brokerage bureaus, *'gastouderbureaus.'*

In addition to the provision described above, there is also pre- and early school education especially aimed at young children with language and developmental problems.⁵²⁹

Box 9.6: Summary of types of services

Day nurseries (*kinderdagverblijf*)
 Playgroups (*peuterspeelzaal*)
 Out-of-school care (*buitenschoolse opvang*)
 Family day care with registered childminders (*gastouderopvang*)

9.7.3 Public/private mix of provision

→ Formal childcare provision in the Netherlands is now a fully demand-led financing system.⁵³⁰

⁵²³ Plantenga, J., 'Local providers and loyal parents: competition and consumer choice in the Dutch childcare market.' In E. Lloyd and H. Penn (eds.) *Childcare markets – Can they deliver an equitable service?* Bristol: The Policy Press, 2012.

⁵²⁴ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 6

⁵²⁵ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁵²⁶ *Child care subsidy*, Available at:
<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kinderopvang/vormen-van-kinderopvang>

⁵²⁷ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁵²⁸ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁵²⁹ 'National monitor pre- and early school education,' 2008, page 5.

Until the late 1990s, the Dutch childcare system was essentially characterised by a dichotomy between a market and a social welfare approach. Where both parents had employment, they bought places in a private market of day nursery provision, playgroups or family day care, or alternatively arranged informal childcare at home or with relatives. The informal care share of this market was estimated at 60%, so played a significant role in parental childcare arrangements.⁵³¹

Over the past few years, the types of providers have changed. In 2003, 60% of the settings providing childcare (day nurseries and out-of-school care) were not-for-profit institutions. In 2010, only 30% of the locations providing childcare were not-for-profit institutions.⁵³²

Growing employer support via 'company places' and a limited amount of fiscal support for private places bought by parents on lower incomes became available through a series of 'stimulus measures' around the new millennium.⁵³³ Local authorities allocated subsidies to formal childcare providers to place children with socio-economic needs. In many cases such places were with not-for-profit providers such as playgroups or nurseries run by charitable foundations. Some 70% of formal providers offered subsidised places. In the early childhood settings and in the first years of compulsory schooling, programmes were introduced to close developmental gaps between these children, notably those from minority ethnic communities, and better off children.⁵³⁴

9.7.4 Financing and costs

Childcare financing in the Netherlands is a tripartite system.⁵³⁵

Since the adoption of the Childcare Act (2005), the government gives fiscal subsidies directly to parents to cover part of childcare costs.⁵³⁶

→ Since 2007, all employers are obliged to pay a percentage of their employees' salaries – of both those with and those without children – to the government to cover a part of the costs of childcare. In 2011, this was 0.34% of the total salary.⁵³⁷

Employees are reimbursed by their employer for a third of childcare costs for children under twelve. The employer childcare levy is shared in the case of two

⁵³⁰ Plantinga, M., Plantinga, J. and Siegers, J., (2010) 'The relation between market forces and employee motivation: consequences of the introduction of market forces in the Dutch childcare sector,' *European Sociological Review*, vol 26(4): p. 401-414.

⁵³¹ Plantinga, J. *Het Kind en de Rekening*. Inaugural Lecture. Groningen: University of Groningen, 2002.

⁵³² 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 10.

⁵³³ CPB, *Een Analyse van de Groei van de Formele Kinderopvang in het Recente Verleden and in de Nabije Toekomst*. CPB Notitie, The Hague: Centraal Plan Bureau, 2008.

⁵³⁴ Schonewille, B. *Wat is VVE. Wat is de Effectiviteit ervan en onder welke Condities is VVE Effectief?* Utrecht: SARDES, 2004.

⁵³⁵ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011.

⁵³⁶ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 6.

⁵³⁷ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 6.

employed parents, so that each parent would then receive one sixth of the costs from their respective employers. Because of the increase in costs in recent years (see below), the government has decided that from 1 January 2012 parents can only receive both subsidies for 1.4 times (with regard to day nurseries) or 0.7 times (with regard to out-of-school care) the hours that the partner who works the least has worked.⁵³⁸

→ The government also pays an income-dependent subsidy, which is lower for the first child than for the second and further children.

The amount of money the government spends on subsidies for childcare has increased from €0.7 billion (£.6 billion) in 2005 to €3.2 billion (£2.6 billion) in 2011. Almost 40% of this sum comes from the amount employers must pay to the government. It is estimated that this increase is caused by an increase in children using childcare (50% of the increase) and by an increase in the average hourly childcare payment made by parents (causing 15% of the increase).⁵³⁹ Furthermore, there was a 200% increase in the number of registered childminders.⁵⁴⁰

Local authorities fund playgroups and other early compensatory education, and since 2009 (-2012) have spent €20 million (£16 million) on this sector, over and above the amount received from central government for this purpose.⁵⁴¹

Parents cannot get childcare subsidies for playgroups.⁵⁴² The Dutch government takes the view that families are themselves responsible for the education of children under four years of age and only subsidises the preschool education of those children who have been assessed as being in need of pre-school education.⁵⁴³

This leads to the situation that in some municipalities, like Amsterdam,⁵⁴⁴ enrolment in playgroups for children who need preschool education is free and in some, like the Hague, a small parental contribution is requested – in this case €20 (£16) a month for four half days a week for the first child and €10 (£8) a month for the second and further children.⁵⁴⁵

⁵³⁸ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 9.

⁵³⁹ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 8.

⁵⁴⁰ Penn, H. And Lloyd, E. (in press) *Childcare costs*, London: Child Wellbeing Research Centre on behalf of DFE.

⁵⁴¹ De Weerd, M. en Paulussen-Hoogeboom, M.C. (2012) *Ontwikkelingen in de omvang en de gemeentelijke financiering van het Peuterspeelzaalwerk*, Eindrapport. Amsterdam: Regioplan Beleidsraad.

⁵⁴² 'Recht op kinderopvangtoeslag,' Available at: <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/kinderopvang/recht-op-kinderopvangtoeslag>

⁵⁴³ Proposal of Law: Amendment of the rules regarding the Parental Contribution to Preschool education in playschools ('Wetsvoorstel wijziging regeling ouderbijdrage voorschoolse educatie peuterspeelzaal'). Available at: <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2012/01/17/wetsvoorstel-wijziging-regeling-ouderbijdrage-voorschoolse-educatie-peuterspeelzaal.html>

⁵⁴⁴ See <http://www.noord.amsterdam.nl/3746/Peuterspeelzalen> (<http://www.north.amsterdam.nl/3746/Playgroups>).

⁵⁴⁵ See <http://www.denhaag.nl/home/bewoners/to/Peuterspeelzalen.htm> (<http://www.denhaag.nl/home/citizens/to/Playgroups.htm>).

→ In 2011, the overall municipality budget for pre- and early school education was €261 (£209.5) million.⁵⁴⁶ This figure excludes the budget for playgroup provision held by local authorities.

The government sets maximum subsidy costs of an hour of childcare. In 2012, this was €6.36 (£5.11) an hour for day nurseries and €5.93 (£4.76) an hour for out-of-school care.⁵⁴⁷

However, in practice the costs of an hour of childcare are often higher. These statistics are not systematically collected across provinces. Statistics from one province – Zuid-Holland – show that with regard to day nurseries, 54% of the locations charge more an hour than the maximum tariff set by the government and with regard to out-of-school care this is 80% of the locations.⁵⁴⁸ In this province, day nurseries that have hour tariffs higher than the government's number charge parents on average €0.18 (£0.15) an hour more, and locations that provide out-of-school care that have tariffs higher than the government's number charge parents on average €0.37 (£0.30) more an hour.⁵⁴⁹

Exact numbers of tariffs an hour in other provinces are not available, but estimates of the percentages of children who pay more than the maximum tariff in other provinces suggest that the tariffs in the rest of the country are lower than in Zuid-Holland.⁵⁵⁰ With regard to day nurseries, in 2011, 14% of the children paid exactly the maximum tariff and 37% paid more than the maximum tariff. For out-of-school care, 6% of the children paid exactly the maximum tariff and 75% paid more than the maximum tariff.⁵⁵¹

9.8 Access levels and patterns of use

In the past few years, the number of children enrolled in day nurseries and out-of-school care has increased significantly. In 2004, fewer than 30% of two to four year olds were attending day nurseries; in 2009 this was almost 60%. In 2006, 5% of four to twelve year olds received out-of-school care; in 2009 this was 16%.⁵⁵²

Correspondingly, the number of available places in day nurseries has significantly increased, from around 100,000 places in 2003 to around 180,000 places in 2010.⁵⁵³ The number of places in out-of-school care has increased even more, from fewer than 60,000 places in 2003 to around 210,000 places in 2010.⁵⁵⁴ The government believes that the latter is to a great extent the result of a 2007 amendment to the

⁵⁴⁶ This figure excludes the local authority budget directed to play groups for the basic provision.

Personal communication from Monique de Koning, Dutch Ministry of Education, October 2012

⁵⁴⁷ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 23.

⁵⁴⁸ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 23.

⁵⁴⁹ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p. 23.

⁵⁵⁰ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p.23-24.

⁵⁵¹ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p.24. See table 2. These numbers cover the whole of the Netherlands.

⁵⁵² 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p.8.

⁵⁵³ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p.10.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011, p.10.

2005 Childcare Act,⁵⁵⁵ which obliged primary schools to organise out-of-school care if parents requested this.⁵⁵⁶

The increasing number of places is due to an increase in the number of providers across geographical areas rather than growth in existing locations.⁵⁵⁷ In 2009, there were 54,000 places available for children in playgroups and 48,000 children were placed in them.

Since 2010 local authorities have the responsibility to provide places for all children in need of preschool compensatory education. Estimates are that in 2011, 80% of this 'target group population' were reached.⁵⁵⁸

In a recent reply to a parliamentary question from the Secretary of State for Social Welfare and Employment, figures were provided on the numbers of children in different forms of provision in 2011 whose parents were in receipt of childcare tax credits. This information is summarised below.

Table 9.1: Number of children (in thousands) in different forms of childcare provision and in receipt of childcare credit and % change

	2005	2007	2010	2011
Total number of children	375	587	822	851
% change		42.1%	2.5%	3.5%
Childcare (0-4)	224	293	373	382
% change		25%	9%	2%
Out-of-school care (4-12)	121	188	315	343
% change		41%	14%	9%
Childminding (0-12)	30	106	134	126
% change		130%	-27%	-6%

Source: Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, *Informatiesheet maatregelen kinderopvang – kinderopvangtoeslag*, Den Haag: SZW, 2011.

The impact of childcare tax credit changes may be detected in the slowing expansion of places. In particular, the figures for childminding uptake in 2010 and 2011 clearly appear to reflect the changes introduced by the Dutch government in 2010 in the way childminding and childminding subsidies were regulated and financed.

Between 2009 and 2010, the number of parents in receipt of a childcare subsidy for childminding provision was reduced by 25%.⁵⁵⁹ This appears to reflect the fact that the expansion of childminders since the introduction of their Childcare Act was primarily driven by grandparents registering to become formal carers for their own

⁵⁵⁵ Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, *Informatiesheet maatregelen kinderopvang – kinderopvangtoeslag*, Den Haag: SZW, 2011.

⁵⁵⁶ Mapping Childcare, page 10.

⁵⁵⁷ Mapping Childcare, page 10.

⁵⁵⁸ National monitor pre- and early school education, 2008, p. 5; personal communication from Monique de Koning, Dutch Ministry of Education, October 2012; see also 'Development Opportunities Through Quality and Education' Act 2010.

⁵⁵⁹ 'Mapping Childcare,' 2011,

grandchildren, rather than by the registration of new childminders incentivised by deregulation to join the profession.⁵⁶⁰

9.9 System of quality assurance in ECEC

Day nurseries, playgroups out-of-school care and registered childminders are the four types of 'formal' childcare available in the Netherlands. These forms of provision are governed by the 2004 Childcare and Quality Standards for Playgroups Act (Wet Kinderopvang en kwaliteitseisen peuterspeelzalen, WKO), unlike informal childcare (minding by friends or relatives, nannies or babysitters) and lunchtime supervision at school.⁵⁶¹

9.9.1 Inspection, monitoring and quality assurance

As a consequence of the introduction of the 2005 Dutch Childcare Act (Wet op de Kinderopvang 2005) childcare is largely deregulated. Instead there is a system of self-regulation in place by means of an annually renewable national 'covenant' between provider and practitioner organisations and oversight of each group setting by a parent committee.

In 2011 the Dutch government reversed some of the 2005 Childcare Act's provisions regarding quality control in 2011. In a move best described as re-regulation, it introduced national policy guidance concerning maximum group sizes and staff:child ratios for day nurseries and playgroups.⁵⁶²

Further legislative changes took place in early 2012. The Dutch government amended the Act to the effect that quality guidance was converted into enforceable regulations. This was the result of legal advice that policy guidance does not allow the enforcement of sanctions in cases where childcare businesses act contrary to such provisions and thereby put children's well-being and healthy development at risk.⁵⁶³

The Netherlands does not employ a unitary regulatory regime; childcare provision is inspected by the local public health authorities, on behalf of the local authority (municipality), which undertakes registration and retains overall regulatory responsibility.

The local authority is in turn inspected by the National Education Inspectorate - *Inspectie van het Onderwijs*, based in the Ministry of Education.⁵⁶⁴ In their latest report,⁵⁶⁵ this agency was quite critical of the way local authorities discharged their

⁵⁶⁰ Daycare Trust with Eva Lloyd, *Childminding in the Netherlands*, policy briefing, London: Daycare Trust, 2012.

⁵⁶¹ European Commission, *Eurypedia*, 2011.

⁵⁶² Minister van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2011.

⁵⁶³ Lloyd, E. (2010 unpublished) *A brief comparison of recent childcare market developments in England and the Netherlands*. London: UEL.

⁵⁶⁴ Lloyd, E. and Penn, H. (2010) 'Why do childcare markets fail? Comparing England and the Netherlands,' *Public Policy Research*, vol 17(1), pp 42-48.

⁵⁶⁵ Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2012.

enforcement duties, particularly in relation to childminders, although overall improvement had been demonstrated.

- The Netherlands does not employ a unitary regulatory regime. Inspections for early education services are separate from those for childcare services.
- Childcare is largely deregulated, though 2012 saw some re-regulation following amendments to the 2005 Childcare Act. The local government's Public Health Department inspects playgroups and day nurseries on behalf of the local authority.
- Early education delivered in years 1 and 2 of primary school is inspected by the education inspectorate. Since 2010, the education inspectorate may also inspect the quality of preschool education provided in day nurseries and playgroups, at the local authority's request.

9.9.2 Workforce qualifications

Pre-primary teachers working in '*Basisschool*' have a tertiary diploma from a teacher training college attended for four years.⁵⁶⁶

For the rest of the Dutch childcare workforce, an increasing number of low level qualifications became available after 2005. Yet by 2008, only 44% of childcare practitioners were qualified to no more than Social and Pedagogical Worker Level Three (SPA3), which equates to NVQ Level Two in England.⁵⁶⁷ Country experts have been unable to provide more recent data.

9.10 Historical overview over ECEC policy

- 1930 Sickness Benefit Act introduces twelve week pregnancy and maternity leave for married women
- 1990 Extension of maternity leave from 12 to 16 weeks
- 1991 Introduction of parental leave
- 1997 Paternity leave and emergency leave introduced
- 2001 Work and Care Act brings legislation on different types of care leave into one Framework
- 2004 Childcare and Quality Standards for Playgroups Act
- 2005 Long-term compassionate leave introduced
- 2005 The Childcare Act - Regulations with regard to the costs and the quality of childcare and childcare facilities

⁵⁶⁶ OECD, *Starting Strong II: Early childhood education and care*, OECD, Paris, 2006, p.387.

⁵⁶⁷ van der Windt, W., Smeets, R.C.K.H. and Arnold, E.J.E., *RegioMarge 2008 – De Arbeidsmarkt van Verpleegkundigen, Verzorgenden en Sociaalagogen 2008 - 2012*. Utrecht: Prismant, 2008.

- 2006 Life-course savings scheme, for funding a subsequent period of non-employment, including parental leave, introduced
- 2009 Fiscal benefit for parental leave introduced
- 2010 'Development opportunities through quality and education' Act
- 2013 Life-course Savings Scheme will be abolished

9.11 Conclusion

Arguably, the Dutch early education and care system has been in a state of flux since the introduction of the 2005 Childcare Act and remains a matter for lively debate in the Dutch parliament, media and elsewhere. Currently there is evidence of a decrease in the number of hours that children spend in childcare as economic austerity also reaches the Netherlands and parental childcare subsidies have been drastically reduced.

The Netherlands has a split and relatively unregulated and uncoordinated system of ECEC. Parental leaves are not designed with ECEC in mind. The role of the employer has been increasing in recent years, and employers are obliged to pay a percentage of their employees' salaries to the government to cover a part of the costs of childcare.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of the quality of early education and care to children's outcomes and the impact on families more generally. Indeed the latest major economic policy report on the impact of childcare reforms on employment recommends that much more research is needed in this area.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁸ Bettendorf, L.J.H., Jongen, E.L.W. en Muller, P., *Childcare subsidies and labour supply: evidence from a large Dutch reform*, The Hague: CPB - Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis, 2012.

10 INTERNATIONAL TARGETS AND PROGRESS

10.1 European Union targets

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) moved centrally into focus with the Lisbon Agenda in 2000. In March 2000, at the European Council meeting in Lisbon the aim was set to make the European Union (EU) 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' by 2010.⁵⁶⁹

A centrepiece of the Lisbon Agenda was the European Employment Strategy (EES) that had among its aims to raise the overall EU employment rate to 70% and to increase the number of women in employment to more than 60% by 2010. The EES explicitly recognised the importance of the availability of suitable childcare provision as an essential step towards achieving equal opportunities in employment between women and men; and in 2002, at the Barcelona summit, the Member States adopted the following targets:

- To provide by 2010 a full-day place in formal childcare to:
 - at least 90% of children aged between three and mandatory school age
 - at least 33% of children under three years of age.⁵⁷⁰

In the period before the 2010 target, there was a pronounced emphasis on increasing the *quantity* of childcare and pre-primary places to enable more parents, especially mothers, to join the labour market. In recent years and in the wake of research on the relationship between high-quality services and child outcomes,⁵⁷¹ the focus has shifted towards the *quality* of ECEC provision.

In 2011, in a Communication on Early Childhood Education and Care, the European Commission emphasised that ECEC is the essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability. It is therefore a central element of the focus on improving and developing the quality and effectiveness of education systems across the EU as to support the overarching Europe 2020 strategy to develop smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe.⁵⁷²

The EC Communication states:

High quality early childhood education and care can make a strong contribution – through enabling and empowering all children to realise their

⁵⁶⁹ European Union Parliament website. *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March Presidency Conclusion*, 2000. Available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm

⁵⁷⁰ European Commission, *Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for preschool-age children*, COM(2008) 638 final; SEC(2008)2597, 2008.

⁵⁷¹ See e.g. Heckman, J. and Kreuger, A., *Inequality in America: What role for human capital policies*, MIT Press: Boston, 2004; OECD, *PISA 2009 results Vol2: Overcoming Social Background*, 2010.

⁵⁷² European Commission, *Communication from the Commission: Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*, 2011. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf

potential – to achieving two of the Europe 2020 headline targets in particular: reducing early school leaving to below 10%, and lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.⁵⁷³

Acknowledging both the recognised aim to improve quality of ECEC services, and that in many countries the targets of expanding ECEC in Europe have not yet been met, the EU has launched a process of cooperation among Member States. This will address the two-fold challenge:

to provide **access to child care and education** for all, but also **to raise the quality of their provision** through well integrated services that build on a joint vision of the role of ECEC, of the most effective **curricular frameworks** and of the **staff competences** and **governance arrangements** necessary to deliver it.⁵⁷⁴ (emphasis in original)

To aid in this process, the EC Communication makes a series of recommendations for the development of national ECEC systems that build on extensive international research on ECEC and international policy learning.⁵⁷⁵

- With respect to **access**, it points to a) the benefits of universally available, high-quality inclusive ECEC services to all children; and b) the importance of efficient and equitable funding that does not exclude low-income families from accessing ECEC, particularly for the under-threes.
- With respect to **quality** it points to the importance of a) integrating ‘care’ and ‘education’ and of developing curricular approaches appropriate to the early years; b) improving staff competences and the professionalisation of the early years workforce, including higher and a broader range of required levels of education, higher salaries and better working conditions; c) the benefits of a more integrated approach to ECEC governance nationally, regionally and locally, with strong collaboration between the different policy sectors, such as education, employment, health, and other social policy.

In light of these recommendations, the rest of the chapter charts to what extent the ECEC systems of the eight nations represented in this review meet the EU targets and where they stand with respect to issues pertaining to:

1. access
 - a. participation in formal ECEC
 - b. funding; particularly costs to parents
2. quality
 - a. level of integration of care and education
 - b. curricular development

⁵⁷³ European Commission, 2011, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁴ European Commission, 2011, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁵ For example, the EU recommendation draws on extensive work by the OECD, e.g. the *Starting Strong* series; *Babies and Bosses* series; and OECD *Doing better for children*, 2009.

c. staff qualifications

3. maternal labour market participation rates

10.2 Access to ECEC

10.2.1 Participation in formal childcare

Table 10.1: Children's participation in formal⁵⁷⁶ childcare by age and usual number of hours per week

Member State	0-2 years (up to 3 years)			3 years – mandatory school age			Admission age to school
	1-29 hours	30 hours or more	Total	1-29 hours	30 hours or more	Total	
Denmark	10%	63%	73%	12%	72%	84%	7
France	17%	26%	43%	47%	47%	94%	6
Netherlands	44%	6%	50%	76%	15%	91%	5
Slovenia	4%	33%	37%	14%	77%	91%	6
Sweden	18%	33%	51%	29%	65%	94%	7
UK ⁵⁷⁷	31%	4%	35%	67%	22%	89%	5
Norway	10%	37%	47%	15%	65%	80%	6

Source: Eurostat. EU-SILC data for 2010. 2009 for Denmark.

The EU-SILC data above indicates that all countries have overall participation rates (any number of hours per week) over 33% for children under the age of three and thus meet the Barcelona targets for this age group. However, according to this data only the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Slovenia meet the 90% target for the three to school age group.

⁵⁷⁶ Formal childcare arrangements include: education at preschool or equivalent, or at compulsory school, care in a day care centre or at centre-based services for out-of-school hours.

⁵⁷⁷ EU-SILC does not differentiate between UK nations.

Discrepancy between EU-SILC data and national data

National statistical office estimates can be somewhat higher than EU-SILC estimates. EU-SILC is a European-wide household survey, which asks parents directly about how their children use various childcare arrangements. EU-SILC estimates are likely to be lower than national estimates because the latter normally report the extent of enrolment (or even places available) rather than patterns of use in a particular week.

There also tend to be national differences in the definition of various childcare arrangements, a key reason for using harmonised data like EU-SILC. For example, in EU-SILC data 'formal' arrangements do not include professional childminders, whereas in France and the UK, childminders are considered to be 'formal' care and are therefore included in national estimates.⁵⁷⁸

National data are also likely to over-estimate enrolment given that some children may use more than one form of childcare, even within a single day, and therefore may be 'double-counted.' EU-SILC avoids this issue by asking how many hours a child spends in various forms of arrangements.

Additionally, the percentages in the birth to two year age group might seem lower than expected in countries where most parents take parental leave for the first year. Such countries often do not report childcare use for children below the age of one year in their national statistics.

While the original wording of the Barcelona targets did not specify what type of formal childcare and for what length of time, the Communication from the European Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care from 2011 specifies that the targets are for full-time provision.⁵⁷⁹

In this light, only in Denmark, Sweden, Slovenia and Norway do 33% or more of all children age three or younger attend ECEC services full-time (30 hours or more). Attendance is predominantly part-time for this age group in the Netherlands and the UK. In France more children under three attend full-time than part-time, but it does not meet the target of 33% full-time.

For the three to school age group, based on EU-SILC data, none of the countries meet the target with full-time participation. Denmark and Slovenia come closest, with 72% and 77% respectively.

10.2.2 Funding

Childcare costs can be a barrier for parents to use ECEC services. Costs are thus an important aspect of access to ECEC. In light of this the European Network on Childcare in 1996 made the recommendation to the European Union that the charges to parents for ECEC services should not exceed 15% of net monthly household income.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁸ Plantenga, J. and Remery, J., *The Provision of Childcare Services: A comparative review of 30 European countries*, European Communities: Brussels, 2009, p. 31.

⁵⁷⁹ European Commission, 2011.

⁵⁸⁰ See European Commission Network on Childcare, *Quality targets in services for young children*. Brussels: European Equal Opportunities Unit, 1996. These recommendations were not officially adopted by the European Commission.

Table 10.2: Net childcare costs (after benefits) as a % of household income for a dual earner family⁵⁸¹

Member State	Net childcare costs
Denmark	9%
France	10%
Netherlands	10%
Slovenia	14%
Sweden	5%
UK	27%
Norway	11%

Source: OECD, *Doing Better for Families*, OECD, Paris, 2011.

Countries vary widely in the extent to which parents bear the costs of childcare services. According to OECD estimates (see table above), net childcare costs are overwhelmingly highest in the UK (27%) compared to the other countries. Slovenia is next highest at 14%. Most of the countries have net costs of between 9-11% while Sweden has net costs of 5%.

In countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Slovenia where ECEC is largely public, with high investment by the state, parental contributions to fees are set by the government.

In the Netherlands, the government sets a maximum subsidy (per childcare hour) for families, but this does not always cover the full fee.

In France, parents benefit from a free public system of early education for three to five year olds as well as a range of childcare subsidies through various family allowances.

In England and Scotland, public expenditure on ECEC is high, but parental contributions are also very high. Many parents of three to four year olds benefit from some free part-time education for their children, but must pay the bulk of other childcare costs.

10.3 Quality in ECEC provision

10.3.1 Integration of 'care' and 'education'

Many European countries have been moving toward administrative integration of ECEC services, which had previously been served by a combination of ministries such as those with responsibilities for education, for health and for employment. At the national level, most countries in this review no longer split responsibility for ECEC services across ministries. The exceptions are France and the Netherlands.

⁵⁸¹ After benefits, for a couple where both earn the average wage. Data from 2008.

Table 10.3: Is ECEC responsibility split across ministries?

Member State		
Denmark	No	Ministry of Social Affairs & Integration
France	Yes	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment & Solidarity and Ministry of Health, Family & Disabled Persons
Netherlands	Yes	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment
Slovenia	No	Ministry of Education & Sport
Sweden	No	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Scotland	No	Minister for Children & Young People and Minister for Learning, Science & Scotland's Languages (but both under Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning)
England	No	Department for Education
Norway	No	Ministry of Education & Research

The countries studied are evenly split between those which offer an integrated system of ECEC services, where both preschool age and younger children are included, and those which offer separate systems depending on age group.

In Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden and Norway, there is an integrated system of ECEC services which cater for children from around one year to school age.

In France, the Netherlands, Scotland and England, ECEC services are different for preschool age children and younger children. Preschool age children are offered education-based formal services, often publicly provided or funded, while younger children are offered a wider variety of services, some of which may be centre-based and some of which may be residence-based (e.g. childminding). Public funding and support is often lower for this age group.

Table 10.4: Do 0-3 year olds and 3-5 year olds use the same type of services?

Member State		
Denmark	Yes	Integrated system from age 26 weeks-7
France	No	Split system of early education for age 3-6; care services for younger children
Netherlands	No	Split system of early education for age 4-5; care services for younger children
Slovenia	Yes	Integrated system from age 1-6
Sweden	Yes	Integrated system from age 1-6
Scotland	No	Split system of early education for age 3 & 4; care services for younger children
England	No	Split system of early education for age 3 & 4 (some for age 2); care services for younger children
Norway	Yes	Integrated system from age 1-6

10.3.2 Curricular development

There is a mixed picture of curricular development across the countries in the review. Those countries which offer an integrated system of ECEC services tend to have a national curriculum, whereas those which offer separate systems would not have a national curriculum for care services.

Table 10.5: National curriculum by country

Member State	
Denmark	All facilities must offer an educational curriculum, but standards are not set nationally
France	National curriculum for early education; None for care services (crèches must set educational goals for children)
Netherlands	No prescribed curriculum for care services, but must have a 'pedagogical plan'. Early 'compensatory' education only provided for children with particular needs.
Slovenia	National curriculum for all preschools, for all age groups
Sweden	National curriculum for all age groups
Scotland	Curriculum for Excellence (3-18 years); no curriculum for younger children
England	Early Years Foundation Stage, for children from birth to 5 years
Norway	Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens for all age groups

10.3.3 Staff qualifications

The ECEC workforce is fairly similar across countries, and is generally composed of educators or teachers, usually qualified to tertiary level; their assistants, who may or may not have formal qualification requirements; other workers such as children's nurses and carers; and childminders. All the countries required some form of tertiary education or training for ECEC teachers and educators. Childcare workers are often trained to upper secondary vocational level. Childminders are not usually required to have formal qualifications but are either offered or required to have some prior training.

Table 10.6: Statutory requirements for tertiary education

Member State	
Denmark	At least 3.5 years tertiary training required for pedagogues/educators; no tertiary requirement for other staff
France	Tertiary degree (Masters) required for all teachers, including pre-primary; 3-year tertiary diploma required for crèche educators
Netherlands	Pre-primary teachers have a tertiary diploma
Slovenia	At least 3 years required for preschool teachers; no tertiary requirement for other staff
Sweden	3-year tertiary degree required for preschool teachers; no tertiary requirement for other staff
Scotland	Tertiary degree required for all teachers and for managers of centre-based ECEC services ; no tertiary requirement for other staff
England	Tertiary degree required for school teachers, Early Years Professionals and for managers of centre-based ECEC services; no tertiary requirement for other staff
Norway	At least 3 years required for kindergarten teachers; no tertiary requirement for other staff

10.4 Parental employment rates

A centrepiece of the Lisbon Agenda was the European Employment Strategy (EES) that had among its aims to raise the overall EU employment rate to 70% and to increase the number of women in employment to more than 60%, by 2010. The table below shows that ‘even’ parents are reaching these targets, with the exception of UK mothers of children under six.

Table 10.7: Employment rates for parents by sex and age of youngest child⁵⁸²

Member state	Employment rates					
	Child under 6			Child 6-11		
	Mothers	Fathers	<i>Disparity</i>	Mothers	Fathers	<i>Disparity</i>
Denmark	79.7%	90.9%	11.2%	85.6%	94.3%	8.7%
France	65.4%	89.4%	24.0%	79.0%	92.4%	13.4%
Netherlands	76.1%	94.1%	18.0%	78.4%	94.1%	15.7%
Slovenia	81.9%	93.3%	11.4%	84.6%	91.7%	7.1%
Sweden	74.1%	93.4%	19.3%	88.6%	95.8%	7.2%
UK	59.4%	88.0%	28.6%	71.9%	89.5%	17.6%
Norway ⁵⁸³	83-86%	96%	13-10%	86%	96%	10%

Source: Eurostat 2011.

Maternal employment is lowest in the UK (59.4% for those with children under six) and highest in Slovenia (81.9% for those with children under six). Paternal employment rates are high overall, in the high 80s to low-mid 90s range.

In all the countries, maternal employment rates are lower than paternal employment rates, regardless of the age of the youngest child. In all countries, the difference between maternal and paternal employment is higher among those with children under six years than those with children between six to eleven years.

However, in some countries the gap is much wider than in others. In the UK there is a difference of almost 29 percentage points between mothers and fathers (with a child under six) employed. This gap is lower, but still higher than in other countries, for parents of children age six to eleven, at 17.6 percentage points. The gap between employment rates for mothers and fathers is also fairly high in France (24% for those with a child under six years). The gap between employment rates for mothers and fathers is lowest in Slovenia.

In terms of part-time employment, all countries similarly have higher proportions of part-time work among mothers than among fathers, regardless of the age of the youngest child. The gap between mothers and fathers is highest in the Netherlands, followed by the UK.

Part-time work is particularly high in the Netherlands, for both mothers and fathers. Roughly 87-89% of Dutch mothers, depending on the age of the child, work part-time. By contrast, about 11-14% of Dutch fathers work part-time.

⁵⁸² Data for 2011. For all adults age 20-49. Part-time work is defined according to individual response except in the Netherlands and Norway where part-time refers to fewer than 35 hours usually worked per week.

⁵⁸³ Eurostat data for Norway is not available. These figures were measured separately for mothers of children age one to two, age three to five and age six to nine. Moafi, H. and S  heim Bj  rkli, E., *Barnefamilier tilsynsordninger, hoesten 2010*, Rapport 34-2011, Statistics Norway: Oslo, 2011.

Part-time work is also common in the UK, with about 58% of British mothers working part-time.

Table 10.8: Part-time employment for parents by sex and age of youngest child⁵⁸⁴

Member state	Part-time employment					
	Child under 6			Child 6-11		
	Mothers	Fathers	Difference	Mothers	Fathers	Difference
Denmark	30.5%	4.5%	26.0%	33.4%	3.7%	29.7%
France	36.3%	4.6%	31.7%	34.9%	3.8%	31.1%
Netherlands	87.2%	13.7%	73.5%	88.5%	11.2%	77.3%
Slovenia	12.0%	2.5%	9.5%	5.1%	Not available	n.a.
Sweden	40.8%	7.9%	32.9%	43.9%	4.4%	39.5%
UK	58.1%	7.0%	51.1%	58.3%	6.4%	51.9%
Norway ⁵⁸⁵	27-29%	6-7%	21-22%	31%	6-7%	24-25%

Source: Eurostat 2011.

10.5 Conclusion

This thematic chapter set out to ask whether the eight countries considered in this review are meeting EU Barcelona ECEC recommendations with regard to access and quality; and European Employment Strategy recommendations with respect to female labour market participation rates.

- Based on overall participation rates in formal care (any number of hours per week), all our countries meet the 33% target for the birth to three years age group, but only in Denmark, Sweden, Slovenia and Norway do 33% or more of under-threes attend ECEC services full-time. According to EU-SILC data only the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Slovenia meet the 90% target for the three to school age group with respect to overall participation rates, but none of the countries in this review meet the targets for full-time participation.
- Countries vary widely in the extent to which parents bear the costs of childcare services, with England and Scotland coming out as the most expensive to parents.
- At the national level, most countries no longer split responsibility for ECEC across ministries.

⁵⁸⁴ Data for 2011. For all adults age 20-49. Part-time work is defined according to individual response except in the Netherlands and Norway where part-time refers to fewer than 35 hours usually worked per week.

⁵⁸⁵ Eurostat data for Norway is not available. These figures were measured separately for mothers of children age one to two, age three to five and age six to nine. Moafi, H. and S  heim Bj  rkli, E., *Barnefamiliers tilsynsordninger, hoesten 2010*, Rapport 34-2011, Statistics Norway: Oslo, 2011.

- The countries studied are evenly split between those which offer an integrated system of ECEC services, where both preschool aged and younger children are included, and those which offer separate systems depending on age group.
- The professionalisation of the early years workforce is more advanced in countries with integrated ECEC services.
- All countries in the review meet the European Employment Strategy recommendations for parents with children aged 6-11, and almost all for parents with children aged 0-6 (the exception being the UK).
- In countries with split ECEC systems, mothers have lower employment rates, in Scotland and England considerably so, or are less likely to be in full-time employment.

Social Research series

ISSN 2045-6964

ISBN 978-1-78256-416-4

web only publication

www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

APS Group Scotland
DPPAS13952 (02/13)

